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ENGLISH WOMEN
IN LIFE & LETTERS

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The Young Débutante

invited to make her choice between Virtue and Vice

From the Ladies' Magazine for 1780

ENGLISH WOMEN
IN LIFE & LETTERS

HQ1593
P5

By M. PHILLIPS *and*
W. S. TOMKINSON

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PREFACE

This book describes the lives of past Englishwomen, some rich and of great place, others poor and unknown to fame. The material is in the main historical; but throughout the book we have drawn freely upon the rich stores of English fiction, the better to illustrate and interpret our theme. Thus Pamela Andrews and Moll Flanders testify in these pages along with Dorothy Osborne and Fanny Burney. And it has been thought well to allow our witnesses to tell their own story with as little prompting as possible.

We wish to express our indebtedness to Methuen & Co. for permission to use an extract from Ethel Rolt Wheeler's 'Famous Blue-Stockings'; to Mrs. Ada Ingpen and to her publishers, Hutchinson & Co., for allowing us to use a letter from 'Women as Letter-Writers'; and to G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., for permission to quote liberally from Mr. H. B. Wheatley's transcript of Pepys's Diary. The chapter on medieval women owes much to Mr. Coulton, whose work has placed students of the social life of the Middle Ages under a perpetual debt.

Our thanks are also due to Mr. E. A. Greening

184070

Lamborn for his kindness in reading Chapters I and IV in manuscript, and to Mr. R. S. G. Brocklebank for his valued help in the proof-reading.

Mr. John Johnson, Printer to the University, has supplied the illustrations. Mr. Johnson's skill and taste as an illustrator of books has notably enriched our text ; and indeed, without his long-continued and happy oversight, this book could never have come into being. We regret that he has not seen fit to add his name to the title-page.

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I

TWO CENTURIES OF ENGLISH WOMEN

THIS book is intended to tell of the life of English women during the past two hundred years, but before introducing Dorothy Osborne and Elizabeth Pepys, whose story is told in the next chapter, it will be well to say something of the women who lived before their day. And although the figures of these far-away times must perforce remain dim and unsubstantial, although, as Froude lamented, 'Between us and them there is a great gulf fixed', yet the patient labour of men of learning has recovered for our day many lively pictures of medieval women. More fortunately we possess two wonderful little sketches, small in scale yet marvellously minute, by one of the keenest eyed among all English writers—Geoffrey Chaucer. His portraits are to be found in that unforgettable company of men and women who rode out of London in the spring of the year 1385, on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. Among

them the poet places his Wife of Bath and his Lady Prioress, selected from two great classes of the women of his time, the gentle or well-born, and the middle-class housewife and small trader ; a happy choice, thought William Blake, painter of The Canterbury Pilgrims, since both, though widely contrasted, stand for enduring types of womanhood in all ages. A third and greater class, the ' servaunt woman ', whether bond or free, had neither the leisure nor the means to go on pilgrimage ; of them Chaucer says nothing. Here is a picture of Chaucer's gentle Prioress as the poet saw her on that long-ago May morning. If we colour the bare black and white in accord with Chaucer's description in the Prologue to the *Tales*, and avail ourselves of the magic whereby the poet gives us the inward being as well as the outward seeming of Madame Eglentine, we shall have as clear an idea of the kind of woman whose brothers were captains and commanders at Poitiers as may be. She wears a black cloak and a white tunic beneath, the uniform of her order of the nuns of St. Benedict ; her ' wimple ' or neck cloth (useful as a protection in foul weather and becoming at all times) is ' ful semely pinched ', and from her arm depends a string of beads ' gauded al with grene ' to which is fastened a brooch of gold with a posy engraved upon it, ' Amor vincit omnia '. The face above the wimple is very much more charming than would appear from the drawing, the nose straight and comely, the eyes ' greye as glas ', a smiling mouth, ' smal and therto softe and reed '. And Chaucer's account of her disposition matches delightfully with the fairness of the outer woman

—al was conscience and tendre herte.

She was so full of pity that she would weep for a trapped mouse, were it ' deed or bledde '. A heart so overflowing,

Chaucer's Prioress, from the Ellesmere MS.

'Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was;
Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed.'
Chaucer. Prologue to the Canterbury Tales

The Wyfe of Bath

'Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat'
Chaucer. The Prologue

and debarred by the nuns' vow from sharing the love of children and home, must needs (so it appeared to Chaucer) have something to cherish ; and so Madame Eglentine kept as pets small dogs delicately fed with ' rosted flesh, and milk and wastel breed '.

Ladies who pamper their lap-dogs are not unknown even in our day ; more, perhaps, to our present purpose is the account which Chaucer gives of his gentle Prioress's schooling and accomplishments. Following the use of the ' Scole of Stratford atte Bowe ' she had learned to speak a peculiar variety of French, called English-French, and she was skilled in singing the Church services ' entuned in hir nose ful semely '. Though it would match well with her dainty ways, there is, alas, no evidence for assuming that in her everyday speech she knew, as did the Friar who was of her company, a pleasing trick of lisping to make ' her English sweet upon her tongue '. But what does strike Chaucer as worthy of mention in Madame Eglentine is her extraordinary mildness of speech. And indeed a woman who contented herself with so harmless an oath as ' by Seinte Loy ' must have been remarkable among a nation notorious (as Erasmus observed long afterwards) for hard swearing. But it is in her table manners that Chaucer's Prioress best shows her gentle breeding.

> She leet no morsel from hir lippés falle,
> Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
> Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
> That no drope ne fell upon hir brest.

All of which were accomplishments not to be despised in an age when forks were unused.

So much has been said of the Lady Prioress, because she is by far the most finished portrait remaining to us of the well-bred woman of her time. Yet there are omissions

and discretions in Chaucer's drawing, which need to be filled in by other (and alas, duller) writers. Madame Eglentine's education for example ! Was the French of Stratford-atte-Bowe, and a pleasant trick of singing down the nose, all that went to the complete schooling of a great lady in the Middle Ages ? Almost, but not quite. The age of learned women was not yet. But reasonable men in the Middle Ages thought, as Mr. Coulton puts it, ' that there was no harm in educating a girl to read the Psalter and to write her own letters ', and that further learning was superfluous if not actually undesirable. The author of *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry* is clearly of this opinion. ' Howbeit there be suche men that have opynion that thei wolde not that her [their] wyves nor her doughtres shulde knowe nothinge of the scripture ; as touchinge unto the holy scripture, it is no force thoughe women medill not nor knowe but litell thereof ; but forto rede everi woman it is the better, that canne rede and have knowinge of the lawe of God, and forto have be lerned to have vertu and science to withstond the perilles of the sowle.' It is not exactly our idea of what a woman's education should be, and yet perhaps it is not too hard to understand (and forgive) when one remembers that the men of the time, even the rich and high, sought recreation, not in the library, but in the stable. Curiously enough, ' to withstond the perilles of the sowle ' was thought to be the chief end of a woman's education, even so late as the eighteenth century ; nay, it persisted—as for example in that most exasperating line of Kingsley's, ' Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever '—almost down to our own time. In this matter of education, English women of the late Middle Ages were sadly behind women abroad. Thus an Italian writer in dedicating a book on education

(in 1472 ?) to a noble Italian lady insists that women shall be taught such studies as will best lead 'to the profitable enjoyment of life', and, in particular, History, which he places first, Poetry, and such authors as best display 'the inner secrets of Nature and of the Soul'. Possibly most modern schoolgirls would agree with him that the 'subtleties of Arithmetic and Geometry are not worthy to absorb a cultivated mind'. Yet for a conception of woman's education so noble and wide in its aim as this of Bruni d'Arezzo we in England had to wait until the nineteenth century had almost begun to decline.

For the life led by Madame Eglentine and her kind within the four walls of a nunnery we cannot do better than turn to the account of a 'Visitation'. These visitations or inspections were carried out by the great dignitaries of the Church with a view to discovering and correcting such abuses as creep into societies of men and women who live secluded from the eye of the world, and uncorrected by the restrictions of a life lived before men. One such visitation was made by Bishop Stapeldon of Exeter to Polsloe Priory in or about the year 1308. It should first be remembered that religion was the greatest and in fact almost the only profession open to English women in the Middle Ages, and that many women became nuns for reasons which had little to do with a desire to serve God and advance Christ's kingdom.

The Bishop enjoins on the nuns at Polsloe these following observances, among others, which he commands to be read out in the Convent four times a year.

'*To wit*, that silence be kept in due places, according to the Rule and observances of St. Benedict.'

Necessary conversation is to be 'gentle and low', and in the Latin tongue—this last a counsel of perfection,

since in Bishop Stapeldon's time the majority of nuns were notoriously ignorant of Latin.

'*Item*, that all Ladies of Religion in your house, except such as are hindered by sickness or other reasonable cause, shall come with one accord and without delay to Matins, Mass, Vespers, Compline and other Services, to Collations, Chapter and Refectory.'

There were certain relaxations which Bishop Stapeldon at Polsloe allows, yet not without a trace of misgiving. 'Let no Lady of Religion [says the Bishop] go to visit her friends without the Priory, unless it be once a year at the most, and then by permission and for a reasonable cause. *Item* when a Lady of Religion eateth at Exeter, or elsewhere in the neighbourhood, by leave and with reasonable cause, let her ever have a companion, and a chaplain, clerk, or squire of good repute assigned by the Prioress, who shall go, tarry, and return with them.' Chaucer tells us of Madame Eglentine :

> Another NONNE with hir hadde she
> That was hire chapeleyne, and PREESTES thre,

but then she was head of her house, and would be expected to travel with becoming dignity. From time to time the nuns were 'blooded' for the sake (as it was thought) of their health ; and then they were allowed better food and excused from early rising. The visits of wandering minstrels, jugglers, and tumblers were always welcome, and for the winter fireside there were jest books, 'demaundes joyous', and riddles. Here are two such riddles. 'Why came dogges so often to the chyrche?' 'Wherfore set they upon chyrche steples more a cocke than a henne?' But it would hardly be fair to give the answers.

When we find Bishop Stapeldon so strongly insisting that certain rules should be kept, it is but natural to think (what is actually the truth) that they were very far from being kept. Nor did the nuns lack excuses ; it was

a particular objection of theirs that 'the men who made these statutes sat well at their ease when they decreed these things against us, imposing such hard and intolerable restrictions', a protest against man-made laws for women which has not yet been entirely silenced.

This short and imperfect sketch of the religious profession among English women in the Middle Ages may well close with a few sentences from The Ancren Riwle, that is, The Nun's Rule, once thought to have been written by Richard Poore, Bishop of Salisbury between 1217 and 1229. Just previous to the passage quoted, the writer has been telling his nuns that they ought not to keep cattle lest their anxiety when the cows stray should betray them into the use of language very unbecoming in a nun.

'Ye shall not possess any beast, my dear sisters, except only a cat. An anchoress [nun, that is] that hath cattle appears as Martha was, a better housewife than anchoress; nor can she in any wise be Mary, with peacefullness of heart.

'Next your flesh ye shall wear no flaxen cloth, except it be of hard and of coarse canvas. Whoso will may have a stamin, and whoso will may be without it. Ye shall sleep in a garment and girt. Wear no iron, nor haircloth, nor hedgehog skins; and do not beat yourselves therewith, nor with a scourge of leather thongs, nor leaded; and do not with holly nor with briars cause yourselves to bleed without leave of your confessor; and do not, at one time, use too many flagellations. Let your shoes be thick and warm. In summer ye are at liberty to go and to sit barefoot, and to wear hose without vamps, and whoso liketh may lie in them. If ye would dispense with wimples, have warm capes, and over them black veils. She who wishes to be seen, it is no great wonder though she adorn herself; but, in the eyes of God, she is more lovely who is unadorned outwardly for his sake. Have neither ring, nor brooch, nor ornamental girdle, nor gloves, nor any such thing that is not proper for you to have.'

It would seem as if their director had as much difficulty

in restraining his nuns from over mortifying their bodies as Bishop Stapeldon had in persuading the nuns at Polsloe to discipline theirs; but The Ancren Riwle, although written long after the rise of monastic life in England, still shows that love for Christ and scorn of this world possessed the hearts of many women. In 1308 things were different.

The well-born lay woman, such a one for instance as Margaret Paston, led a much freer and fuller life than her sister in religion. On her was laid the task of ordering large numbers of servants, of keeping good store of food and clothing, and of physicking if need be the members of her household. The problem of providing a constant supply of food was real enough in times when transport was uncertain and difficult, and a local shortage not easily made good. But the wholesale curing and preserving, especially of fish, which went on in large households, helped the mistress (whether lord's wife or yeoman's wife) to face cheerfully the long English winter when fresh food was scarce. Here is a breakfast menu copied from the house-book of a noble family, the Earl of Northumberland's, which will help to make this point quite clear.

'Braikfaste for my Lorde and my Lady. Furst A Loif of Brede in Trenchors ij Manchetts a Quart of Bere a Quart of Wyne ij Pecys of Saltfisch vj Baconn'd Herryng iij White Herryng or a Dysche of Sproits.

'Braikfaste for my Lorde Percy and maister Thomas Percy. Item half a Loif of household Brede a Manchet a Potell of Bere a Dysch of Butter [salt] a Pece of Saltfish a Dysch of Sproits or iij White Herrynge.'

These were Lenten breakfasts, which explains the preponderance of fish. Manchets, it should be said, were loaves made of a fine white flour. It will be noticed that all the fish are from the sea, probably because the

Earl's castle stood within easy reach of the coast. Inland housewives would substitute eels, carp, or bream from the stew-ponds for the 'Dysche of Sproits and White Herryngs'. A flesh breakfast, this time for the nurse, consisted of :

'BRAIKFASTIS for the Nurcy for my Lady Margaret and Mr Yngram Percy. ITEM a Manchet j Quart of Bere and iij Muton Bonys boiled.'

Dinner in the great households was a much more elaborate meal, and often served with music and dancing.

Margaret Paston, whom we have just spoken of, belonged to a noble Norfolk family ; they took their name from Paston village in Norfolk, and their monuments are still to be seen in Norfolk churches. The 'Paston Letters', from which we get our knowledge of Margaret, were written to and by the Paston family during the reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV, and Richard III ; the letters touch upon many subjects, upon love and marriage, politics, local gossip, household economies ; they throw a clear light upon the lives of a well-born, though not always well-to-do family, who lived five hundred years ago.

Margaret Paston was Margaret Mauteby when young John Paston wooed her, and John's mother writes to her husband, Sir William Paston, a King's judge, in very pleasant mood about the forthcoming wedding. 'The parson of Stockton told me if ye would buy her a gowne, her mother would give thereto a goodly fur ; the gown needeth for to be hadde, and of colour it would be a goodly blew, or else a bryght sanguine.' A 'bryght sanguine' it must have been, let us hope, for scarlet was Margaret's favourite colour. In 1443 Margaret is married and a mother ; and her husband has been sick and troubled in London while she frets for him in

Plainer fare (circ. 1415)

(*Bibl. de l'Arsenal, Paris MS. 664 ; H. Martin, op. cit.*)

A Sumptuous Meal

' She leet no morsel from hire lippes falle '
From ' Queen Mary's Psalter ', 1912

Norfolk ; and she has sent (so she writes) four nobles to the friars at Norwich to pray for him ; and she has vowed to make pilgrimage to 'Our Lady of Walsingham' when she has good news of him ; and she would rather have him safe at home 'than a new gowne though it were of Scarlet'. The cares of a household press on her. 'Ryght worshipfull husbande', she writes, 'I commend me to you ; I pray you that ye will buy two dozen trenchors for I can non get in this towne' (Norwich that is). At another time she asks her absent husband to buy her a pound of sugar and a pound of almonds (presumably they were cheaper and easier to get in London), and she wishes for 'some frieze to make of your childrens gownes'. Sometimes she prefers a request for herself. 'I praye you that ye will do your cost on me agaynst Whitsuntide, that I may have something for my necke.

When the Queene was here I borrowed my cosin Elizabeth Cleres device, for I durst not for shame go wyth my beades amongst so many freshe gentlewomen as here were at that tyme.' The Queen was Margaret of Anjou, who was at Norwich in 1452, trying to rally Norfolk men to the Lancastrian banners. Possibly Margaret got her 'device', for years later (in 1469), writing a letter of matrimonial advice to her eldest son John, she says, 'I send you the ouch [a brooch or clasp] with the diamond, by the bearer hereof'. Perhaps the 'ouch' was intended as a wedding present for John's chosen; but the 'Kersche of cremelle' [a neckcloth of cotton] which Margaret in the same letter asks her son to send to her in return, was for John's sister, Anne, and one wonders why Margaret Paston could 'none get in all this town', for Norwich was the home of a weaving trade.

The times were unquiet, and Margaret, both before and after the death of her husband, had sterner cares than the duties of a housewife and the management of matrimonial affairs for improvident sons and stubborn daughters. She desires Sir John to get and send to her cross-bows and 'quarrels [steel arrows] for your houses here bee so lowe, that there may non man shoot out with no long bowe, though wee hadde never so moch neede'. Her forebodings were realized. Sir John Paston was imprisoned, and died impoverished at a London inn, and the great house at Caistor was taken from the Paston family by force. One more letter, written in happier days, may be quoted. It shows Margaret Paston in her kindliest mood, and a very lovable woman she must have been. The letter would be carried by a messenger, and great families often kept 'running footmen' for this work.

NORWICH,
Thursdey, July 1, 1451.

To my right worshipful husband, John Paston, be this delivered in haste.

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL HUSBAND.—I recommend one to you, desiring heartily to hear of your welfare. . . . I was at Topps at dinner on St Peters day : there my Lady Felbrigg and other gentlewomen desired to have had you there ; they said they should all have been the merrier if ye had been there.

Also, I pray you heartily that ye will send me a pot with treacle [medicinal syrup] in haste, for I have been right evil at ease and your daughter both since that ye yeden [went] hence, and one of the tallest young men of this parish lyeth sick, and hath a great myrr [catarrh]—how he shall do God knoweth. I have sent my Uncle Berney the pot with treacle that ye did buy for him. . . .

Sir Harry Inglos is passed to God this night, whose soul God assoil ; and was carried forth this day at nine of the clock to St Faith's, and there shall be buried.

If ye desire to buy any of his stuff, I pray you send me word thereof in haste, and I shall speak to Robert Inglos and to Wickingham thereof : I suppose they may be executors. The blessed Trinity have you in His keeping. Written at Norwich in haste on the Thursday next after St Peter.

I pray you trust not to the sheriff for no fair language.

Yours,
MARGARET PASTON.

Margaret Paston was mistress of a great house, yet evidently she had little leisure. A medieval poem called 'The Squyre of Lowe Degree' tells the story of a high-born lady, a princess in fact, who had much leisure but little occupation. The story tells how a princess mourned for her true lover and refused to be comforted, although her father, the king, suggested very many diversions to occupy and console his daughter. The king's speech to his daughter is the most attractive picture of medieval life which has come down to us, but of course so pleasant

Husbandry

Knight and his Lady. Hawking

Illustrations from a sixteenth-century calendar

a life as this is seen to be, was only possible for a very few women. The king begins his programme of pleasures thus :

To morrowe ye shall on hunting fare,
And ryde, my daughter, in a chare,
It shal be covered with velvet reede,
And clothes of fine golde al about your heede,
With damaske white, and asure blewe,
Well dyapred with lyllyes newe ;
Your pommelles shal be ended with gold,
Your chaynes enameled many a folde.
Your mantel of ryche degre,
Purpyll palle, and armyne fre ;

The horses were to be worthy of their mistress.

Jennettes of Spayne, that ben so wyght,
Trapped to the ground with velvet bryght ;

When hunting wearied the princess, then there was hawking :

Homward thus shal ye ryde,
On haukyng by the ryvers syde,
With goshawke, and with gentyll fawcon,

And after hawking :

When you come home, your men amonge
Ye shal have revell, daunces and songe ;
Lytle chyldren, great and smale,
Shall syng, as doth the nyghtyngale.
Than shal ye go to your suppere,
And sytte in tentes in grene arbere,
With clothes of aras pyght to the grounde,
With saphyres set and dyamonde.
A cloth of golde abought your hed,
With popynjayes wrought in shining red
And offycers all at your wyll,
All manere delyghtes to brynge you styll.

Evidently the time is summer, and supper an early

British Museum Add. MS. 38126

British Museum Add. MS. 35315

Lovemaking

He squireth me bothe up and doun'
The Wife of Bath's Tale

meal (it was often at six). After supper the king suggests that his princess may please to—

> walke in arbere up and downe
> To se the floures of great renowne.

Or if she prefers, she may take the air on the water :

> To a drawbrydge then shal ye
> The one half of stone, the other of tre ;
> A barge shall mete you, full ryght,
> With twenty-four ores full bryght,
> With trumpettes and with claryowne,
> The fresshe water to rowe up and downe

Darkness descends :

> Forty torches, brenynge bryght,
> At your brydges to brynge you lyght.
> Into your chambre they shal you brynge,
> With muche myrthe and more lytyng.
> Your costerdes covered with whyte and blewe,
> And dyapred with lyllyes newe.
> Your curtaines of camaca, all in folde,
> Your felyoles all of golde.

Last scene of all in this round of delights :

> When you are layde in bedde so softe
> A cage of golde shal hange alofte,
> With longe-peper fayre burnyng.
> And cloves that be swete smellyng,
> And yf ye no rest may take,
> All nyght mynstrelles for you shall wake.

But to all these promised diversions the love-lorn maiden makes answer,

> Gramercy, father, all these thynges lyketh not me.

The description of the princess's own room, her 'oryall', cannot well be omitted, and with it should be compared Shakespeare's description of Cymbeline's

lovely room in the play of that name, which tells us what my lady's chamber looked like in the days of the Tudors. The room of the princess looked out on to an arbour, bright with the ' floures of great renowne '.

> In her oryall there she was,
> Closed well with royal glas,
> Fulfylled it was with ymagery,
> Every wyndowe by and by,
> On each syde had there a gynne,
> Sperde with many a dyvers pynne.

The ' ymagery ', pictures that is, would be on the tapestry covering the walls, although the ' royal glas ' seems to suggest that the windows too were enriched with devices and designs. The pins for the window fastening (the ' gynne ') were sometimes made of ivory ; on the floor would be rushes.

It would seem that high-born medieval ladies were not idle even in their pleasures. The wives of the yeoman farmers and country traders were almost incredibly industrious, that is if they did all they were supposed to do. The following suggestions for the use of good housewives are taken from an old book called *The Book of Husbandry*, and it is comforting to reflect that many of the women for whom they were intended would not be able to read them.

' In the begynynge of Marche, or a lyttell afore, is tyme for a wyfe to make her garden, and to gette as many good sedes and herbes as she canne, and specially suche as be good for the potte, and to eate . . . let thy dystaffe be alwaye redye for a pastyme, that thou be not ydle. And undouted[ly] a woman cannot gette her lyvynge honestely with spynnynge on the distaffe, but it stoppeth a gap. . . .

' It is convenyente for a housbande to have shepe of his owne, for many causes, and than maye his wife have part of the woll, to make her husbande and herselfe some clothes. And at the

least waye, she may have the lockes of the shepe, eyther to make clothes or blankettes and coverlettes, or bothe. And if she have no woll of her owne, she maye take woll to spynne of clothe-makers, and by that meanes she maye have a convenyent lyvynge, and many tymes to do other warkes. It is a wyves occupation, to wynowe all maner of cornes, to make malte, to wasshe and wrynge, to make heye, shere corne, and in tyme of nede to helpe her husbande to fyll the mucke-wayne or dounge-carte, dryve the ploughe, to loode hey, corne, and suche other. And to go or ride to the market, to sel butter, chese, mylke, egges, chekyns, capons, hennes, pygges, gese, and all maner of cornes. And also to bye all maner of necessarye thynges belongynge to houssholde, and to make a trewe rekenynge and a-compte to her housbande, what she hath payed.'

Even the author seems to suspect that these are large orders, for he warns the housewife, and not without good reason, that it ' may fortune sometime, that thou shalt not well knowe where is best to begyn ', an opinion which his model housewife would conceivably agree in. Our drawing shows such a housewife (so apparently they did actually exist) taking the ' egges ' and ' chekyns ' to market. It is of rather later date than the extract, but fits it too well to be omitted.

The housewife, it will be perceived, was a good woman of business, such as we may imagine Chaucer's Wife of Bath to have been. She, in her day, was a clothmaker from a town still famous for its cloth, and the size and quality of her Sunday ' coverchiefs ' were no bad advertisements for her old craft. She was retired from business, when Chaucer met her, and took to going on pilgrimages, of which she had already made many, more for diversion than devotion. She had been married five times, and it is clear that it will not be long before she leads a sixth to the altar—but why spoil her unique character by a threadbare relation, when with the aid of a few footnotes one can go to the master himself? Here, then, is

Husbandry. An illumination from British Museum Add. MS. 24098 (*c.* 1500)

'It is a wyves occupation, to make heye, shere corne, and in tyme of nede to helpe her husbande'
The Book of Husbandry

the Wife of Bath, ancestress of Dame Quickly, and first, in English letters, of a long line of disreputable but fascinating old women.

A good WYF was ther OF bisyde BATHE,
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.
Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon,
That to th' offring bifore hir sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyne scarlet reed,
Full streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten other companye in youthe;
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge streem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at seint Jame, and at Coloigne.
She coude muche of wandring by the weye:
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.
Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.

The picture on p. 3 shows the Wife of Bath as she rode out of the Tabard Inn, Southwark, in Chaucer's company.

Hardly respectable is she, this roystering Wife of Bath. And although Chaucer deliberately deepened the shadows

The Noble (*c.* 1500)

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of his portrait, as artists will do, yet in one very important particular his drawing is faithful and true. 'From garments cometh a moth, and from women wickedness'; with 'that ilke proverb of Ecclesiaste' the medieval churchman agreed so heartily that there was little danger of women being allowed to forget it. The Wife of Bath maintained that it was manifestly impossible for a 'clerk' to speak good of women; and she had good reason to know, for her fifth husband, Jankin, the young Oxford priest, took his pleasure in plaguing her with stories of bad women, of which he had great store and as many proverbs all on the same subject. 'By god', the wicked old woman exclaimed in a pardonable moment of exasperation,

> By god, if wommen hadde writen stories,
> As clerkes han with-inne hir oratories,
> They wolde han writen of men more wikkednesse
> Than all the marke [race] of Adam may redresse.

It would seem that men in the Middle Ages could not forget and forgive the sin of Eve through which 'Womman was the los of al mankinde'. And woman either chafed under man's yoke, or took refuge in 'deceite and weping', all of which defences were given to them by God, thought the Wife of Bath, to enable them to get the better of men. But although women were long-suffering in the Middle Ages, it is not to be believed that they always endured man's injustice with the preposterous patience of that poor Griselda, whose story is so beautifully told by Chaucer. Indeed, it is clear that Chaucer himself grew somewhat impatient with the patience and meekness of his own heroine. He exclaims in an aside to the reader at the story's end—

> Grisilde is deed, and eek hir pacience

and so far from commending her as a model to good wives married to overbearing husbands, he advises such women to speak up boldly in defence of their rights, and even, if need be, defy their lords and masters:

'And lat him [the husband, that is] care, and wepe, and wringe, and waille.'

This attitude of the Middle Ages towards women is by no means peculiar to Chaucer. In the story 'Frederik of Gene' four merchants travelling abroad fall to discussing the doings of their wives at home. Johan of Florence thinks that merchants who trust their wives are 'fools and nydeates' because 'a woman's nature is to be unstedfaste and tourneth as the wynde dothe, and careth not for us tyll the tyme that we come agayne'. And so he advises his comrades to make merry since their wives are in all probability merry-making (with their husband's money) at home. Another old book, this time a jest-book, *The Hundred Mery Tales*, points to the fickleness of woman as a familiar moral (Tale XLVI). 'Here ye may see it is harde to fynde a woman wythout an excuse' or, again, as another critic words it, 'Excuses are neuer further off women than their apron strings'. But perhaps the clearest proof of the common mistrust of women may be seen in the kind of questions put to penitents of the Middle Ages by priests at the confessional. They are particularly interesting as showing how difficult it must have been for the married woman to keep the straight rule of the Church. These questions are taken from the pocket-book of one 'Johannes Gysborn', a priest.

Questions for a woman.

Haue ye maid youe more gayer in Reyment off Kercheus one your hed, for plesur of y^e^ world?

Haue youe obeyd your husband at alle tymes, os ye are bownd?

Haue youe weschyd your face with any stylled waters ore oyntementes to make youe fayrer in the syght off pepull ?

Haue youe had any envy agayns any womane, that sche has been fayrer than youe, or better loved than youe ?

Haue youe bene mystemperyd with ale att any time ?

Haue ye bakbyted or slaunderd any man or woman ?

Haue youe maid any solemne vowe of fast ore pylgrimage ?

Haue youe payd your tythes & offerynges onto the chirche ?

Haue you done your pennans [penance] ?

It is clear that the Wife of Bath would have come off badly with John Gisborn for confessor, in spite of her readiness at church offerings and her zeal in pilgrimages. Nor would she have been approved of by the writer of *The Book of Husbandry*, whose description of a good housewife has already been noted. Still less would she have satisfied the author of a poem (of about 1430) which Mr. Coulton well calls 'The Perfect Woman'. It is much too long to quote, but one single stanza will be sufficient to show how very far the Wife of Bath fell away from perfection in women, as it was thought of by the men of the Middle Ages.

Go thou not into the toun as it were a gase
From oon house to another for to seek the mase
Ne wend thou not to the market thi borel for to selle,
And thanne to the taverne thi worschip to telle,
For thei that tavernes haunten,
Her thrifte thei adaunten,
Mi leve child.

More to the good wife's taste would have been the two cronies celebrated in verse in the Commonplace Book of an English gentleman, by name Richard Hilles, who lived in the beginning of the sixteenth century. (The version is the one given by Froude, whose lament over the vanished past is quoted from on p. 1 ; the theme is the oft-sung praise of good ale.)

The Vanity of Dress. The devil sits astride the lady's train. On the right, the lady confesses to the priest
From Bibl. Nat. Paris MS. Franc. 9198, photo Catala. *'Haue ye maid youe more gayer in Reyment . . . for plesur of ye world?*
Question to be used during the confessional, from the note-book of John Gisborn, Priest

'Good gossip mine, where have ye been ;
It is so long sith I you seen
Where is the best wine, tell you me
Can ye aught tell ?' 'Yea, full well.

I know a draught of merry go down,
The best it is in all the town.
But yet I would not for my gown,
My husband wist.' 'Ye may me trist.'

Call forth our gossips, bye-and-bye,
Eleanour, Joan, and Margery.
Margaret, Alice, and Cecily ;
For they will come, both all and some.

And each of them will something bring,
Goose or pig, or capon's wing,
Pasties of pigeons, or some such thing.
For we must eat some manner meat.

'A strype or two God might send me,
If my husband might here see me.'
'She that is afeared, let her flee,'
Quoth Alice then,—'I dread no men.'

'How say ye, gossips, is the wine good ?'
'That is it', quoth Eleanor, 'by the rood.
It cheereth the heart and comforts the blood.
Such jonkets among shall make us live long.'

'Now reckon our shot, and go we home,
What cometh to each of us ?' 'but threepence'
'Pardye, that is but a small expense
For such a sort, and all but sport.'

And what of her who served the gossips ? Skelton, poet laureate in Henry VII's reign, describes her kind in his verse on Eleanor Rumming, a famous London tavern-keeper of his time. The description of her dress, hardly so fine as that of the Wife of Bath, but not unlike to it, is worth notice.

'When Skelton wore the Lawrell Crowne
My Ale put all the Ale-wives downe'.
Skelton, 'The Tunnynge of Elynour Rummynge.'

Below, the interior of an inn. Above, an ale-house keeper

From a seventeenth-century Broadside

The poem tells how hostess Rumming looked both at home and on holiday.

In her furr'd flocket,
And grey russet rocket,
Her [cloak] of Lincoln green ;
It had been her's I weene
More than forty yeare
And so it doth appeare,
And the grene bare threads
Look like sea-weeds,
Withered like hay,
The wool worn away ;
And yet I dare say
She thinks herself gay,
Upon a holiday,
When she doth array
Her kirtle Bristow red,
With cloths upon her head,
They weigh a ton of lead,
She hobbles as she goes,
With her blanket hose,
Her shoone smeared with tallow.

'Kate, Cysly and Sare', Elynor's customers, must have been most unpleasant to look on. 'A sorte of foule drabbes', says Skelton, and much more of a like kind. 'Some women pay coin for their ale ; some a rabbit, or honey, a salt cellar, spoon, hose, a pot, meal, a wedding ring, a husband's hood or cap, flax or tow, distaff or spinning wheel, thread, yarn, a piece of bacon. All [says a modern writer whose description of the poem I copy] must have ale.' Most shameless of all in 'this mad mumming' is the nun who pledges her prayer beads for liquor.

We have left the 'servaunt woman' as befits her humble condition to the last. Her lot was pitiable.

'A servaunt woman is ordeyned [says an old writer] to lerne

the wyves rule and is put to offyce and werke of traveyllye, toylynge and slubberynge. And is fedde with grosse mete and symple, and is clothed with clothes and kepte lave under the yoeke of thraldom and of servage ; and, if she conceyve a chylde, it is thralle or it be borne, and is taken to servage. Also if a servynge woman be of bonde condicion she is not suffred to take a husbonde at her owne wylle ; and he that weddyth her, if he be free afore, he is made bonde after the contracte. A bonde servaunt woman is bought and solde lyke a beeste. Also a bonde servaunt sufferith many wronges, and is bete with roddes, and constreyned and holde lowe with diverse and contrarye charges and travayles among wretchydness and woo.'

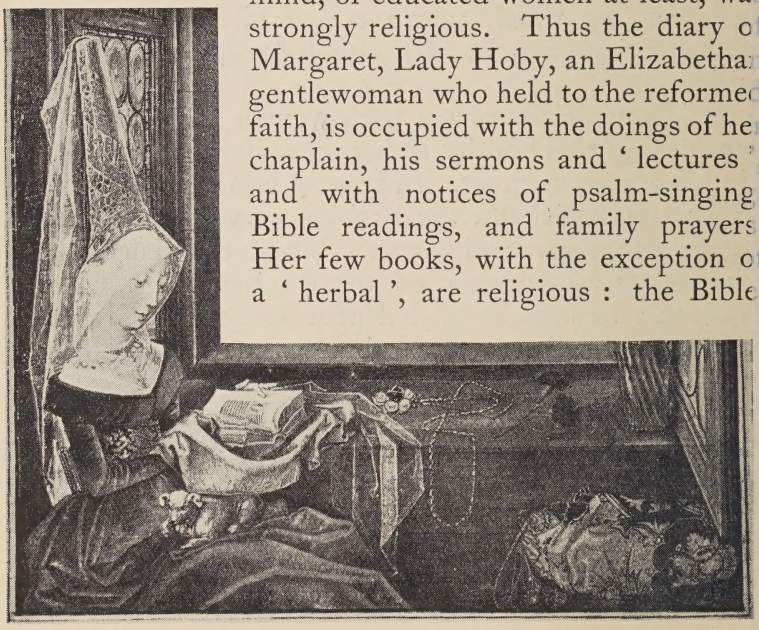
This is perhaps somewhat too harsh a description of the servant's lot. In England, at all events, servants could not be sold as individuals, although when land changed hands they became the property of the new owner. Servants could bind themselves to serve of their own free will, for which they received hire. The ' bonde servaunte ' woman was fed and lodged, but not paid a wage.

It is long in time from such women as we have been considering to Dorothy Osborne, and the difference in kind is almost as great. But under two English queens, Mary and Elizabeth, the position of women (as might be expected) gradually bettered, and especially is this true of the education of the gentlewoman. Roger Ascham tells how he visited poor Lady Jane Grey, and found her reading a Greek book while the rest of the company were hunting in the park.

' I founde her ', he says, ' in her Chamber readinge Phaedon Platonis in Greek, and that with as moch delite as Some gentlemen would read a merry tale in Bocace. After salutation and dewtie done, with som other taulke, I asked hir, whie she wold leese soch pastime in the Parke ? smiling, she answered me : I wiss, all their sporte in the Park is but a shadoe to that pleasure that I find in Plato. One of the greatest benefites that ever God gave me,

is, that he sent me so sharpe and severe Parentes, and so jentle a scholemaster. For when I am in presence either of father or mother, whether I speake, kepe silence, sit, stand, or go, eate drinke, be merie or sad, be sowyng, plaiying, dauncing, or doing anie thing els, I must do it, even so perfitelie, as God made the world, or else I am so sharplie taunted, so cruellie threatened yea, presentlie, sometymes with pinches, nippes, and bobbes, and other waies, that I thinke myselfe in hell, till tyme cum that I must go to M. Elmer ; who teacheth me so jentlie, so pleasantlie with soch faire allurementes to learning, that I thinke all the tyme nothing, whiles I am with him.'

Queen Mary of England could read Latin and speak French and Spanish ; but it was hardly to be expected that education would make much progress among women during her troubled reign. Women, as well as men, were distracted by bitter religious quarrels ; the bent of mind, of educated women at least, was strongly religious. Thus the diary of Margaret, Lady Hoby, an Elizabethan gentlewoman who held to the reformed faith, is occupied with the doings of her chaplain, his sermons and 'lectures', and with notices of psalm-singing, Bible readings, and family prayers. Her few books, with the exception of a 'herbal', are religious : the Bible



Lady Jane Grey

A portrait attributed to Lucas de Heere (1534–84) and reproduced by the courtesy of the editor of 'The Connoisseur'

Foxe's *Booke of Martyrs*, and sermons. Another Margaret, Countess of Beaufort, and mother of Henry VII, had long time before translated a French religious book into English.

'This heavenly book, more precious than gold'

as the flattering printer described it. She, of course, belonged to the old religion. And Margaret Hoby, reading in her *Booke of Martyrs*, would find therein the story of women who gave up their lives for the new ideals of the Protestant reformers.

Not that the Protestant reformers showed much inclination to reform the position of women. Indeed, the most bitter attack on women, much more bitter than the scoffs and gibes of the Middle Ages, was made by the best-remembered of all Scotch reforming preachers. John Knox wrote of women as he found them (so he says), 'weak, frail, impatient, feeble and foolish, inconstant, variable and cruel'; he thought that to promote a woman 'to bear rule' was 'repugnant to Nature and contrarious to the ordinance of God', this last phrase a shaft aimed at his own Queen, Mary of Scotland. John Calvin, founder of a new religion, wrote to Sir Robert Cecil that queenship ought to be classed with slavery, as one of the unavoidable evils brought on mankind by the sin of Eve; to which Cecil replies by telling Calvin Elizabeth's opinion of John Knox and his 'First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women'. Even a priest of the next age, the gentle and holy George Herbert, ranks women along with sick folks and the passionate minded, as beings with whom it is difficult to reason. Nay, one of the wisest men not only of Elizabeth's time but of all time, Michel de Montaigne, in writing the praise of Marie de Gournay, his

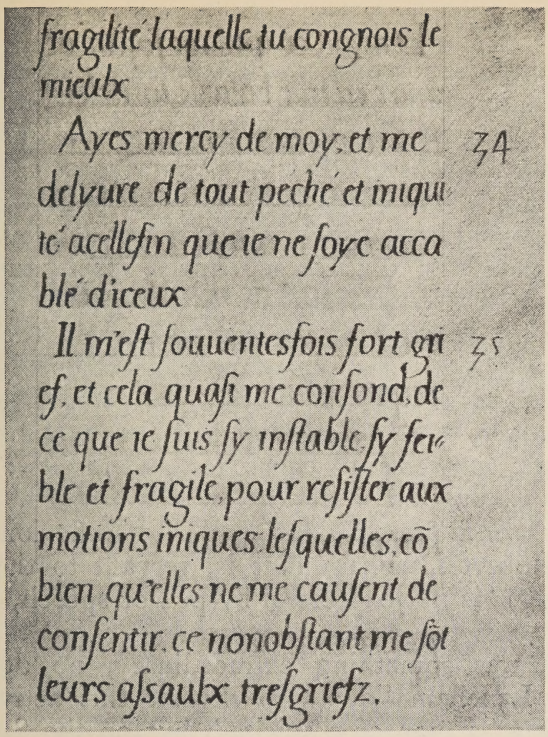
adopted daughter, speaks of her gifts of mind as an 'accident', something, that is, quite out of the ordinary course of things. Montaigne's book was turned into English by John Florio, language master to Anne of Denmark, James the First's queen, but it may be doubted whether she could spare time, from her favourite occupation of cutting up Queen Elizabeth's old dresses, to read it.

Yet it should not be forgotten that the English reformers in religion did a great, though possibly an unintended, service to women in permitting and encouraging the marriage of priests and bishops. It was even said, by their enemies, that they intended to allow women to become priests, or at least to allow them to baptize. The marriage of priests extended the authority of women outside their own home and gave them duties and interests other than those purely domestic ; and for this the Protestant reformers should be remembered and thanked. Queen Elizabeth disliked married priests and frowned on their wives. A priest's marriage had to be approved by a bishop and two magistrates, and then permission had to be sought from the Queen herself. Possibly Elizabeth may have thought that few among her woman subjects were fit mates for men of learning, or that clergymen might make foolish marriages, as did the learned Richard Hooker for instance, married to his landlady's daughter, a vulgar scolding woman, who used to call her husband away from books and good company to mind the baby. It was not without reason that Hooker, in preaching the funeral sermon of a good woman, recommended her 'dearest friends' to be her 'nearest followers in two things, Silence, and Patience'. 'She lived a dove and died a lamb', says Hooker in a beautiful phrase, and the gentleness of the dove, the submission of the lamb, may

well stand as types of the virtues which the grave men of Elizabethan England looked for in their women-kind.

Queen Elizabeth herself had book-learning sufficient to fit her for an archbishop's wife, and was as vain of her knowledge as of her looks, probably with better reason. This is the evidence of Roger Ascham, the famous schoolmaster whose tender account of Lady Jane Grey has just been noticed. 'I was one day present' (he says), 'when she replied at the same time to three ambassadors, the Imperial, French, and Swedish, in three languages, Italian to the one, French to the other, Latin to the third; easily, without hesitation, clearly and without being confused.' He adds that there were not four men in the whole of England who could understand Greek better than the Queen, and encloses in his letter (of date April 11, 1562) a slip of paper with the word *quemadmodum*, written in the Queen's own hand in order that his correspondent may see 'how elegantly she writes'. Ascham hoped that the slip would be 'a pleasant sight and an acceptable present'. Opposite is a specimen of his queen's handwriting; judge whether Ascham praised honestly as a good schoolmaster or flattered politely as a false courtier.

Apart from this solid learning Queen Elizabeth did not neglect in her education to 'sacrifice to the Graces' as an eighteenth-century Earl of Chesterfield, whom we shall meet later, phrased it. She was a musician, a notable dancer, and a poet—or at least she wrote verses and was the cause of much poetry in others. And the fine and young court ladies, taking example from their Queen, occupied their leisure with 'lutes, citherns, pricksong, and all kinds of music'. At all times they danced, for dancing was a passion with the Queen. She cajoled Melville, the ambassador of Mary Queen of Scots, into admitting that his own queen did not dance so


fragilité laquelle tu congnois le
mieulx
Ayes mercy de moy, et me 74
delyure de tout peché et iniqui
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Il m'eſt ſouuentesfois fort en 75
ef, et cela quaſi me confond de
ce que ie ſuis ſy inſtable ſy fee
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bien qu'elles ne me cauſent de
conſentir, ce nonobſtant me fõt
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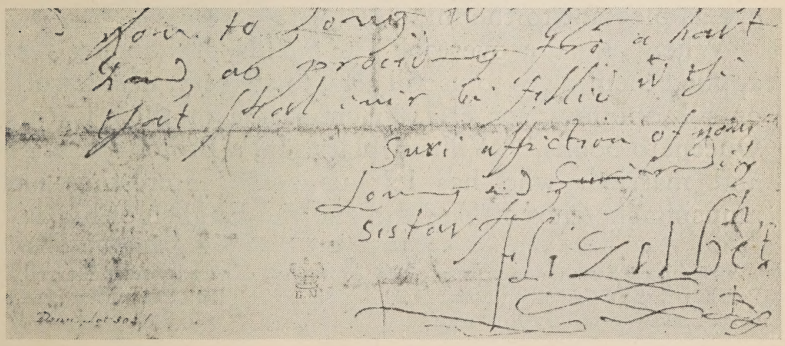
Prayer in the young Princess Elizabeth's handwriting, 1545

'How elegantly she writes'
Roger Ascham in a letter to a friend



Queen Elizabeth's handwriting in old age

'I hope you wyl beare with my molesting you to long with my skrating hand'
Elizabeth in a letter to King James of Scotland, written two months before her death

'high and disposedly' as she herself; at a favourite maid of honour's wedding (Anne Russell in 1600) the French Ambassador is surprised to see England's queen, aged sixty-six, still dancing 'gayement et de belle disposition', blithe and bonny, so to speak. Dancing was a prime qualification for the maids of honour, and the Queen delighted to watch set dances, revels, and dancing feats. At Kenilworth, on the 14th July 1575, where she was being entertained by her favourite, the Earl of Leicester, 'was thear sheawed before her highnes, by an Italian, such feats of agilitee, in goinges, turninges, trumblinges, castinges, hops, jumps, leaps, skips, springs, gambaud, soomersauts, capretties, and flights: forward, backward, syde wyse, a doonward, upward, and with sundry windings, gyrings and circumflexions, as by me' (Robert Laneham that is, servant to the Earl of Leicester) 'is not expressibl by pen or speech, I tell yoo plain'.

This was something extraordinary, no doubt, and indeed Laneham 'doouts' whether this active gentleman, was 'a man or a spirite', but on the Sunday the lords and ladies danced before her somewhat more gravely as befitting the Sabbath, and with 'a lively agility and commendable grace . . . as strange to the eye as pleasant to the mind'.

When old age overtook the maids of honour, they applied themselves to useful arts, to surgery, needlework, or silk spinning, or else, in emulation of their learned Queen, to books.[1] William Harrison, a Protestant priest and married, who has left us some interesting and amusing sketches of England and the English of his day,

[1] Elizabeth herself was no mean needlewoman. There is still preserved at Penshurst, the Elizabethan home of Philip Sidney, a card table with a needlework centre worked by Elizabeth.

The Morris Dance (left) and the Goat-leap (right)

Sundry windings, gyrings and circumflexions, as by me is not expressibl by pen or speech, I tell yoo plain'. Robert Laneham's letter

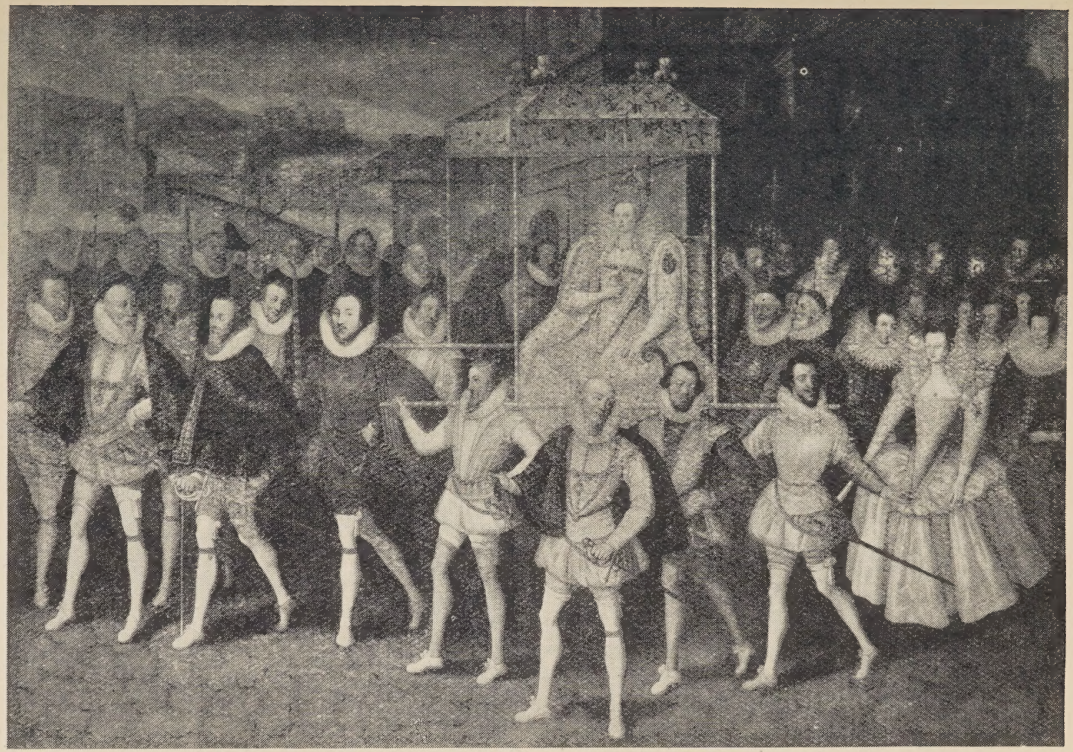
Patches in the seventeenth century

From John Bulwer's 'Anthropometamorphosis', 1653, an early anthropological treatise which endeavoured to find among savage tribes analogies for existing fashions or practices. On the left a savage, on the right an English lady

sets down a full list of ' the ways and means whereby our ancient ladies of the court do shun and avoid idleness '. He approves their ' continual reading . . . of the Holy Scriptures, or histories ', the ' writing of their own ' [volumes], and the ' translating of other men's ' much more than he does their skill in ' sundry artificial practices pertaining to the ornature and commendations of their bodies '.

It is to Harrison that we owe one of the most striking descriptions (it is only a few phrases) of a full court in Elizabeth's reign; ' what a goodly sight it is ' (he exclaims in a rapture) ' to see them muster in the court, which, being filled with them, doth yield the contemplation of a noble variety unto the beholder, much like to the shew of the peacock's tail in the full beauty, or of some meadow garnished with infinite kinds and diversities of pleasant flowers '. To describe fully Elizabethan fashions in women's dress would more than fill this book, but perhaps enough may be said to justify Harrison in his extravagance ; and it should always be remembered that Elizabethan men went finer than the women. It will be helpful to consider the portrait of Elizabeth, given opposite, which shows the extreme of fashion about the year 1580.

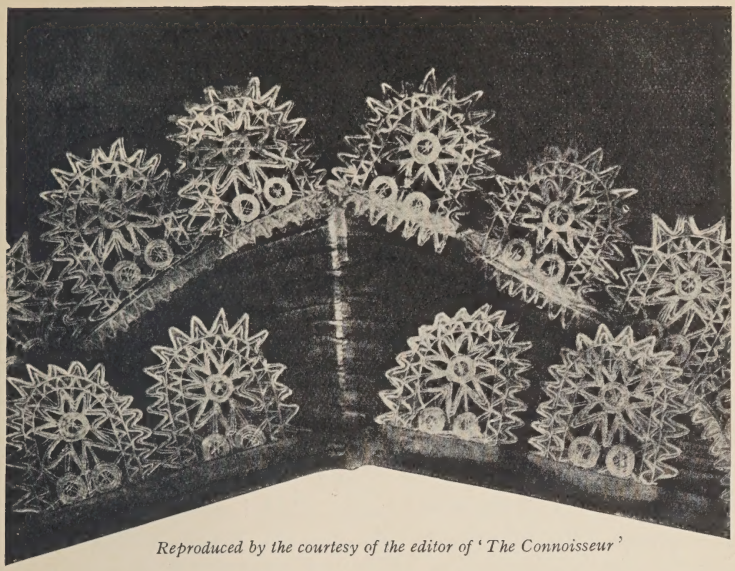
Noticeable in this picture are the ruff, the stiff bodice or doublet, and the enormous skirt or farthingale. The bodice was strengthened with steel or whalebone and reached below the hips. A similar contrivance was worn by men. ' Up fro the waist like a man, new guise to be cased in a doublet ', writes a critic of Elizabethan fashions. The foundation of the farthingale was of canvas stretched on whalebone and covered with brocade or velvet ; it took up so much room that chairs without arms were



Queen Elizabeth in a Court Procession

What a goodly sight it is to see them muster, much like to the shew of a peacock's tail, or of some meadow garnished with diversities of pleasant flowers'. Harrison

necessary, and they are still sometimes called ' farthingale ' chairs. A more graceful variety of the farthingale fell straight in front, and was called a ' semicircled farthingale '. Last, and almost not least, is the great ruff of lace stiffened with starch (yellow was the fashionable colour) and propped up from falling with a ' supportasse ' of wires. The secret of starching was brought from abroad by a Dutchwoman, Mrs. van Dinghem ; she gave lessons in starch-making and starching at the rate of £5 a lesson. It was the ruff which excited the fiercest indignation of the many critics of women's extravagance. The best-known of the critics, a sour Puritan of the name of Stubbs, tells a dreadful story of the fate of a young Dutch girl, who fell into a passion because her ruff would not fit, and wished that the devil might take her the next time she wore it. Apparently he did ; for she sickened mysteriously and died, and upon her coffin being opened, lo the devil himself was discovered in the likeness of ' a black Cat very lean and deformed ', sitting there, ' setting of a great Ruffe '. But neither warnings nor ridicule (as when Stubbs laughed at the great ruffs in a rainstorm, ' striking sail and fluttering like dish clouts ' about the wearer's neck) could check the extravagance ; laws limiting the size of the ruff were made again and again, and always broken. The cost of all this finery was enormous. Mrs. Ratcliffe, a maid of honour's ' whyte saffir gown, all embroidered, richly cutt upon good cloth of silver, . . . cost £180 ', which would represent at least £900 in our money. The Queen's passion for dress is very well remembered by all school girls, and if she did not wear a new dress every day (as was fondly believed) she might very well have done so, for she left behind her ' more than two thousand gowns, with all things else answerable '.



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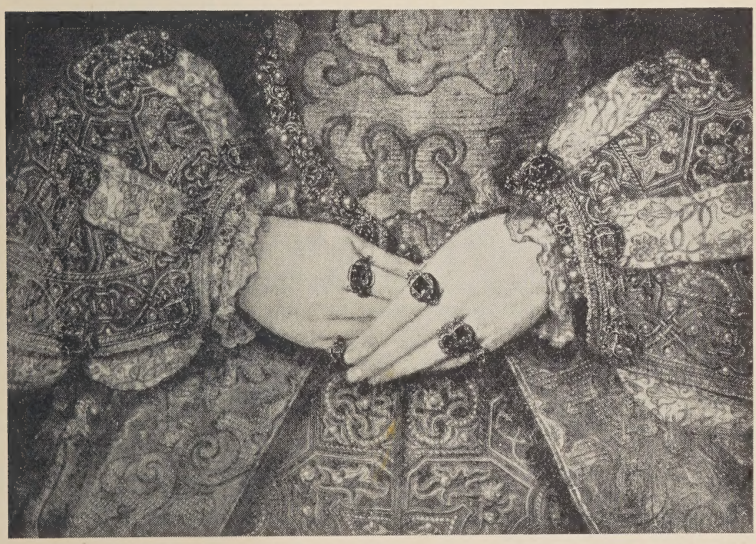


Above, Ruff with Supportasse, and, below, a Stomacher

'Golden quoifs and stomachers
For my lads to give their dears
Pins and poking-sticks of steel'
Autolycus in The Winter's Tale

Yellow was the most admired colour for hair, as well as for ruffs. Unmarried women went bareheaded, even in the street, a fashion which astonished foreigners almost as much as the black teeth of Englishwomen or their custom of greeting strangers with a welcoming kiss. Sometimes a 'coif' or cap was worn, but even then it was placed far back on the head, so as to display the hair.

This following description of a yellow-haired beauty was written by a pope, of all people, before Elizabeth's day, and is not of an Englishwoman, but the story was printed in England three times, the last edition appearing in 1567, when Elizabeth had been eight years on the throne. The heroine was named the 'Lady Lucres', and appeared to a lover's eyes like this: 'Her heare [was] plenteous, and lyke unto the goulde wyre, which hanged not downe behinde her, after the manner and custome of maydens, but in goulde and stone she had enclosed it; her forhed highe, of seemlye space, without wrynkell, her brows bente, her eyne shining like as the sun. . . . Strayt as thriede was her noose. Her mouth smal and comely, her lippes of corall colour, her small tethe, wel set in order, semed Cristal.' We may well take this to be the perfect Elizabethan beauty, because we have her exact opposite drawn for us by Shakespeare's own hand.

> My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
> Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
> If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
> If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
> I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
> But no such roses see I in her cheeks;

And the lover concludes (in another sonnet) that love has blinded his eyes and that his love is as the world sees her, black and ugly.

But it is time to turn from queens and maids of honour

and to say something of the Elizabethan housewives and servants. Harrison has much to say of both. He speaks of the ancient men in his village whose memory would almost take them back to the old times written of in the beginning of this chapter, noticing the spread of comfort and even luxury among poor as well as rich. Whereas in the days of their youth, farmers and their wives were content to lay their heads on a billet of wood for a pillow, and servants were fortunate if they had a sheet under them to keep the straw mattress from pricking their 'hardened hides', now (in Elizabeth's time, that is) they slept softly. They eat off pewter, where before they had used plates of beechwood, and wooden spoons were replaced by tin or even silver. Harrison goes on to lament that French fashions were coming in among the yeomen's wives who before had been content to clothe themselves and their husbands with English cloth, of their own hands' weaving. In short he thinks that Elizabeth's England was rotten with luxury; that the rich, and especially the well-to-do women, were past praying for, and that the middle class and the poor were rapidly becoming corrupted by the example of their betters. Belonging, as he did, to a class of men (the married priests of the Reformation) whose wives were the target for much ill-natured criticism, it is only natural that he should say a good word for his own wife. He tells us that Mrs. Harrison was an excellent manager (that would be necessary on £40 a year), and especially skilled in the making of beer, of which she brewed huge quantity, sufficient to last through the winter, at a cost to her husband of $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ a gallon. The amount of beer drunk by English men, women, and children always astonished visitors to our country; the other thing that amazed them was the skill of English people in music and their

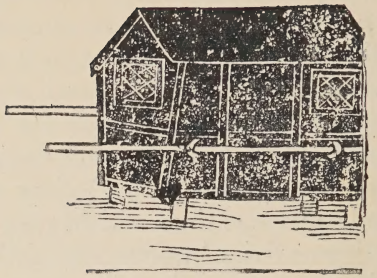
knowledge and love of the art. At festivals and fasts, at the ' brideale ', the christening, and the funeral, the local countryside floated in beer. There were ' ale-wives ' and ' ale-knights ', specially gifted drinkers, whose feats we need not mention. But the country ' brideale ' which was arranged for the amusement of Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth may perhaps be described (by Robert Laneham) here ; it illustrates admirably both that genius for outdoor pageantry and spectacle which was the birthright of the Elizabethans, but which we ourselves have lost, and also that love of good eating and drinking which has made later and sadder generations speak of the England of the old days as ' Merrie England '. Laneham is writing of the gay doings at Kenilworth to his friend in London, a linen mercer like himself.

' At afternoon (Sunday, July 17, 1575) a solemn brydeale of a proper coopl was appointed : set in order in the tyltyard, to cum and make thear sheaw before the Castle in the great coourt. And thus were they marshalld. Fyrst, all the lustie lads and bolld bachelars of the parish . . . but the bridegroom formost, in his fathers tawny worsted jacket, a fayr strawn hat, a payr of harvest gloves on his hands, as a sign of good husbandry : a pen & inkhorn at his bak, for he woold be knowen to be bookish ; lame of a leg, that in his yooth was broken at football : well beloved yet of his mother, that lent him a nu mufflar for a napkin.' Then, preceded by music and morris dancers, ' folloed the worshipfull Bride, led (after the cuntrie maner) between two auncient parishioners : a thirtie yeer old, of colour brounbay, not very beautifull indeed but ugly, fooul, ill favord : yet marveyloous fain of the offis, because shee shoold dauns before the Queen.'

Conceivably the good couple were intended to amuse my Lord of Leicester and his royal and noble guests, yet no doubt they enjoyed the fun as much as any. Let Harrison speak a word of the ' junketings ' which followed such a wedding. ' In feasting also, this latter

sort, I mean the husbandmen, do exceed after this manner, especially at bridals, and such odd meetings, where it is incredible to tell what meat is consumed and spent, each one bringing such a dish, or so many with him, as his wife and he do consult upon . . . and if they happen to stumble upon a piece of venison and a cup of wine or very strong beer or ale (which latter they commonly provide against their appointed days) they think themselves to have fared so well as the Lord Mayor of London.'

Such were the joys of the 'uncounted folk' at a time when the maypole was set on the village green, and the city maidens danced before the house door on holy days after evening prayers 'for garlandes hanged thwart the streets'. Of their sorrows it is not intended to speak.



An early Sedan Chair

II

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY HOUSEKEEPERS IN COUNTRY AND TOWN

In the year 1652, when Oliver Cromwell was Governor of England, there was living in Bedfordshire a clever, beautiful, and virtuous unmarried woman, twenty-five years old, by name Dorothy Osborne. Her father, Sir Peter Osborne, had fought on Charles I's side in the great Civil War, and afterwards had settled down to live quietly in the house which he had inherited. This was Chicksands, an old Catholic Priory converted into a dwelling-house. It was about forty-two miles from London and right in the country, with a large and beautiful garden. Here, in 1650, Dorothy's mother died, and from that time Dorothy took over the management of the house.

To some women Dorothy's life would hardly have been bearable. Sir Peter was irritable in temper and feeble

MS. Egerton 1269, f. 54

From Clarendon's History of the Rebellion

Riding Pillion in the Seventeenth Century

in health, and Dorothy had both to nurse him and to keep him company. They had plenty of money, and Dorothy, though she managed the house and superintended the servants, did very little of the actual housework herself. Very few visitors came to Chicksands, and Dorothy seldom left home, so that she might easily have found time hang heavily on her hands. But several things helped to make her life fuller and happier than it might otherwise have been. For one thing Dorothy enjoyed that most absorbing of all occupations, she was in love.

Three or four years earlier, when travelling to France, she had met for the first time William Temple, who later became famous as a statesman. The acquaintance ripened, and in 1652 Dorothy and William were writing love letters to each other. Letter-writing in 1652 was a troublesome business. There were no railways and no state post office, though the Government, under Cromwell, was trying at this time to set one up. Most letters were carried privately—either by postboys, whose horses were changed at regular stages along the road, or by carrier's wagon. The cost of carriage depended upon the number of sheets sent, so we find Dorothy often chooses a large sheet of paper, and ends her letter suddenly when she has filled the sheet. The cost of sending a letter from Chicksands to London in 1652 was about 2*d.*, but 2*d.* then was worth as much as 1*s.* 6*d.* now.

Dorothy usually wrote her weekly letter on Sunday, and gave it to the carrier on Monday morning. William, in London, got the letter on Monday night or Tuesday morning, wrote his reply on Wednesday, gave it to the carrier on Thursday morning, and Dorothy got it the same night or on Friday. William would sometimes get up at four o'clock on Thursday morning, even during

the winter, to make sure that his letter reached the carrier in time, and Dorothy was so eager for the letter that she would often send a groom on horseback to meet the carrier. This is what she writes one Sunday in April 1653.

'Sir, I am glad you scaped a beating[1] but in earnest would it had lighted vpon my Brothers groome, I think I should haue beaten him myself if I had bin able; I haue *expeictad* your Letter all this day with the greatest *impatiencie* that was possible, and at last resolued to goe out and meet the fellow, and when I came down to the stables I found him come, had sett vp his horse, and was sweeping the stable in great order, I could not imagin him soe very a beast as to think his horses were to bee serued before mee and therefor was presently struck with an aprehension hee had noe letter for mee, it went colde to my heart as Ice, and hardly left mee courage to aske him the question but when hee had drawled it out that hee thought there was a letter for mee in his bagg I quickly made him leaue his broom; twas well tis a dull fellow *hee could not but* haue *dezeern'd* else that I was strangly ouerjoyed with it, and earnest to haue it, for though the poor fellow made what hast hee could to vnty his bag, I did nothing but chide him for being soe slow, at last I had it and in earnest I know not whither an entire diamond of the bignesse on't would haue pleased mee half soe well.'

Dorothy and William met seldom at this time. Dorothy's relations did not approve of the match. For one thing the two families—the Osbornes and the Temples—had taken opposite sides in the recent Civil War. For another, the Temples were not very rich, and though Dorothy's father was an invalid and did not interfere with her much, yet her eldest brother, who often visited Chicksands, was anxious that she should make a rich match, and angry when she refused wealthy suitors.

Dorothy describes her various suitors, and the trouble they caused, in her letters to William. One of the most

[1] The threatened punishment for missing the carrier.

persistent was a widower, Sir Justinian Isham, with one son and four daughters. Dorothy nicknamed him the Emperor, after Justinian, Emperor of Rome. In a letter written about January 1653, after telling William how she had escaped one suitor by insisting that the house he offered her was not fit for her to live in, Dorothy goes on to describe her 'Emperor':

'Presently after this was at an end, my Mother dyed, and I was left at liberty to mourne her losse a while, . . . after this, some freinds that had obserued a grauity in my face, which might become an elderly mans wife (as they term'd it) and a Mother in Law, proposed a widdower to mee that had fower daughters, all old enough to bee my sisters; But he had a great estate, was as fine a Gentleman as euer England bred, and the very Patterne of wisdom. . . . But shall I tell you what I thought when I knew him (you will say nothing o'nt) twas the vainest Impertinent, self conceated, learned, Coxcombe that euer I saw . . . for his sake I shall take heed of a fine gentleman as long as I liue.'

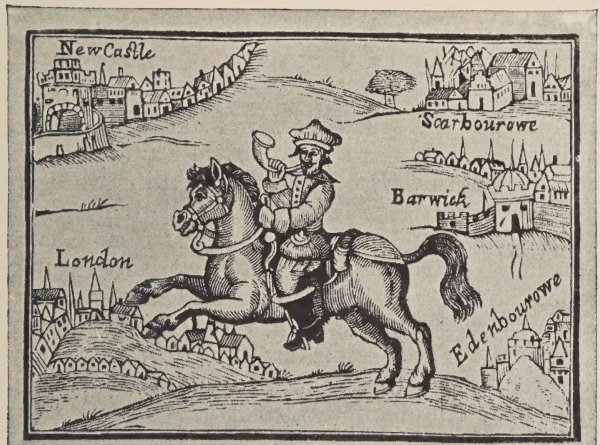
In the following passage Dorothy pictures her ideal lover and some others:

'There are a great many ingredients must goe to the makeing mee happy in a husband, hee must not bee soe much a country gentleman as to understand nothing but hawks and dogs and bee fonder of either than of his wife . . . hee must not bee a Towne Gallant neither that liues in a Tauern or an ordinary, that cannot imagin how an hower should bee spent without company vnless it bee in sleeping, that makes court to all the women he sees . . . and laughs and is laught at equaly; Nor a Trauel'd Mousieur, whose head is all feather inside and outside *that can talk of nothing but dances and duells*, and has courage enough to wear slashes when euerybody else dy's with cold to see him; hee must not bee a foole of noe sort, nor peeuish, nor illnatur'd, nor proude, nor couetous and to all this must be added that he must loue me and I him as much as we are capable of louing, without all this, his fortune, though neuer soe great, would not sattisfye me, and with it, a very moderat one would keep mee from euer repenting my disposal.'

Advertiſements.

THeſe are to give Notice, That the Poſt will go from the General Letter-Office in London, to Allby della Zouch in the County of Leiceſter, three times in every week, on the General Poſt-days, and in like manner return from thence.

The Postal service in its beginnings. Extract from the 'London Gazette No. 2231, April 4–7, 1687

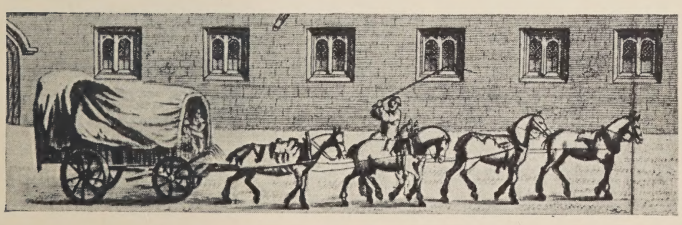


The above is a *fac-simile* of the Woodcut illustrating the "LONDON POST" Newspaper for January, 1647, showing the manner in which the Mail was then conveyed from London to Edinburgh, which at that time occupied *ten days*.

1712—Stage Coach, with Passengers, from London to Edinburgh, in			13½ days.
1784—Newcastle to London		above	3 ditto.
1800—Ditto	ditto		42 hours.
1830—Ditto	ditto		30 ditto.
1844—Ditto	ditto		12½ ditto.

The Post-boy

Reproduced by the courtesy of the editor of 'The Connoisseur'



Seventeenth-Century Wagon in which letters were often carried

From one of Loggan's engravings

Failing such a man, Dorothy was determined to live single. Fortunately she was fond of the country, and this fact made her life with Sir Peter much happier than it might otherwise have been. A letter written in 1653 gives an account of her daily occupations. Evidently her garden was Dorothy's great standby. She writes :

'You aske mee how I passe my time heer, I can give you a perfect account not only of what I doe for the present, but of what I am likely to doe this seuen years, if I stay heer so long, I rise in the morning reasonably early, and before I am redy I goe rounde the house till I am weary of that, and then into the garden till it grows too hott for mee, about ten o clock I think of makeing me redy, and when that's don, I goe into my fathers Chamber, from thence to dinner, where my Cousin Molle [1] and I sitt in great state in a Roome and at a table that would hold a great many more. After dinner wee sitt and talk till Mr B [2] comes in question and then I am gon, the heat of the day is spent in reading or working, and about sixe or seuen o clock I walk out into a common that lyes hard by the house where a great many young wenches keep sheep and cows, and sitt in the shade singing of Ballads. . . . I talke to them, and finde they want nothing to make them the happiest people in the world, but the knoledge that they are soe ; most comonly, when we are in the middst of our discours, one looks aboute her and spyes her Cows goeing into the Corne and then away they all run, as if they had wings at theire heels. I that am not soe nimble staye behinde, and when I see them *driueing* home theire cattle I think tis time for mee to retire too, when I haue supped I goe into the garden and *soe to* the syde of a small Riuer *that runs by it* where I sitt downe and wish you with mee. . . . I sitt there sometimes till I am lost with thinking, and were it not for some Cruell thoughts of the crossenesse of our fortunes, that will not lett mee sleep there, I should forgett that there were such a thing to bee don as goeing to bed.'

Reading was another source of interest and pleasure to Dorothy, and this was very fortunate since she had to

[1] Otherwise Cousin Henry, at this time paying a visit to Chicksands.
[2] The suitor of the moment.

A NEW
Orchard and Garden,

Or

The beſt way for planting, graſting, and to make *any ground good, for a rich Orchard: Particularly in the North,* and generally for the whole kingdome of England, as in nature, *reaſon, ſituation, and all probability, may and doth appeare.*

With the Country Houſewifes Garden for hearbes of common uſe, their vertues, ſeaſons, profits, ornaments, variety of knots, models for trees, and plots for the beſt ordering of Grounds and Walkes.

As alſo the Husbandry of Bees, with their ſeverall uſes and annoyances, all being the experience of 48. yeares labour, and now the third time corrected and much enlarged, by *William Lawſon.*

Whereunto is newly added the Art of propagating Plants, with the true ordering of all manner of Fruits, in their gathering, carrying home, and preſervation.

London, Printed by *Edward Griffin* for *John Harison*, at the golden Vnicorne in Pater noſter-row. 1638.

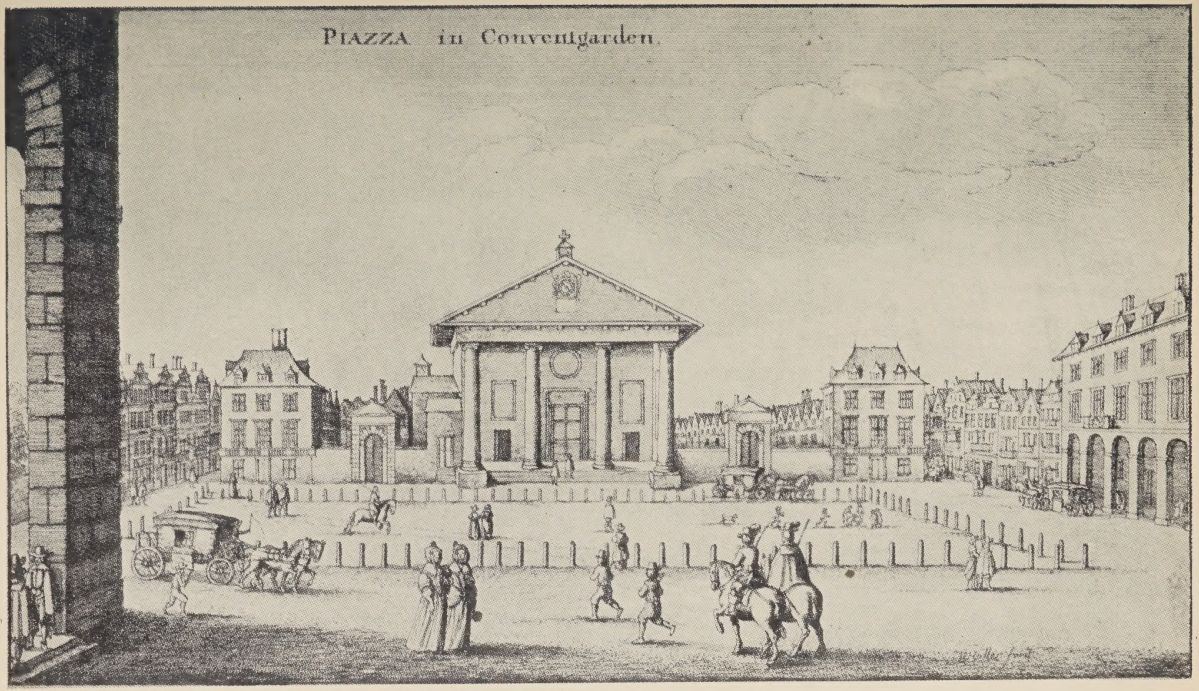
live so much alone. She was fond of travel books—perhaps because Temple travelled so much, and of biography and novels and plays. She could read Latin, French, and Italian. She was also interested in the many scientific discoveries which were being made at this time, and especially in talk of flying—thinking, so she says, that it might some day be of use to her ! Her brother scoffed at the idea of women caring for such things.

Evidently Dorothy often read more than was good for her. (This was partly Temple's fault, since he kept her constantly supplied with new books from London.) One day she writes :

'Whoe told you I goe to bed late, in earnest they doe mee wronge I haue bin faulty in that point heretofore I confesse but tis a good while since I gaue it ouer with my reading o' nights ; but in the day time I cannot liue without it tis all my diuersion, and infinitly more pleasing to mee than any company but yours.'

Dorothy's way of life did not, in fact, serve to keep her healthy. She suffered from several complaints that were common at that time and especially from the then fashionable disease, the 'spleen'. People supposed to be suffering from spleen were sent to Epsom, Barnet, Tunbridge Wells, and other towns near London where there were mineral water springs, or they were treated in other and less pleasant ways. Here are extracts from Dorothy's letters, showing the kind of treatment given to her :

'They doe soe fright mee with strange story's of what the spleen will bring mee to in time that I am kept in awe with them like a Childe, they tell mee 'twill not leaue mee common sence, that I shall hardly bee fitt company for my owne dogs . . . to preuent this, whoe would not take steel or anything ; . . . I doe not take the powder, as many doe, but only lay a peece of steel in



Covent Garden Piazza

From a seventeenth-century engraving by Hollar

white wine ouer night and drink the infusion next morning which one would think were nothing and yet 'tis not to be imagin'd how sicke it makes me for an hower or two, and, which is the misery, all that time one must bee vseing some kinde of exercise; your fellow seruant[1] has a blessed time on't. I make her play at shutle-cock with me, and she is the veryest bungler at it that euer you saw, then am I ready to beate her with the batledore, and grow soe peeuish as I grow sick that i'le undertake she wishes there were noe steel in England.'

'I haue gotten an Ague that with two fitts has made mee so very weak that I doubted extreamely yesterday whither I should bee able to sitt up to day to write to you. . . . Hear is my eldest Brother and my Cousyne *Molle and* two or three more of them that haue great understanding in Agues . . . & they doe soe tutor and gouern mee that I am neither to eate drink nor sleep without theire leaue.'

Though living in the country Dorothy had a lively interest in fashions, shops, and knick-knacks, and often asked William to do some shopping for her in London. In one of her letters, after mentioning her great friend Lady Diana Rich, she continues :

'And now I speake of her, she has giuen mee the occasion to make a request to you. . . . She says that seals are much in fashion and by showeing mee some that she has, has sett me a longing for some too, such as are oldest and oddest, are most prized, and if you know anybody that is lately come out of Italy, tis ten to one but they haue store for they are very common there, I doe remember you once sealed a letter to mee with as fine a one as I haue seen, it was a Neptune, I think, rideing upon a dolphin, but I'me afrayde it was not yours, for I saw it noe more . . . if such things come in your way, pray remember mee.'

In reply to this letter William sent her a selection of the sort of seals she wanted, to choose from. Dorothy was delighted with them, and shared them with her friends. She wrote in reply :

'You haue made mee soe rich, as I am able toe helpe my Neigh-

[1] The nickname given by William to Dorothy's maid.

bours there is a litle hedd cutt in an Onixe that I take to bee a very good one, and the Dolphin is (as you say) the better for being cutt less, the odnesse of the figure makes the beauty of these things.'

On another occasion she writes :

'When you goe into the Exchange praye call at the great shop aboue (The Flower Pott) I spoke to Heams' the man of the shop, when I was in towne, for a quart of Oringe flower water, hee had none that was good then, but promised to gett me some, pray putt him in mind of it, and let him show it you before hee sends it mee, for I will not altogether trust to his honesty.'

In January 1654, when Temple is just setting off on a journey to Ireland, Dorothy has, among others, one most important commission for him :

'Did not you say once you knew where good french tweeses were to bee had, I pray, send mee a *pair* they shall cutt noe loue, Before you goe I must haue a ring from you too, a plain Gold one, if I euer marry it shall bee my wedding ring or when I dye i'le giue it you againe.'

And later :

'I haue not thanked you yet for my tweeses and the essences; they are both very good. I kept one of the little glasses myself; remember my ring and in retourne if I goe to London whilest you are in Ireland, i'le haue my picture taken in little[1] and send it you . . . you must giuen Nan leaue to cutt of a lock of your haire for mee too.'

When the ring and the lock of hair arrive she says :

''Twill bee pleasinger to you I am sure to tell you how fond I am of your lock; well in earnest now, and setting aside all complement; I neuer saw finer haire nor of a better *couler*; but cutt noe more on't I would not haue it spoyled for the world, if you loue mee bee careful on't. I am combing and curling and kissing this lock all day and dream on't all night. The ring too is very well only a little of the biggest. Send me a *Tortoshell* one to keep it on that is a little lesse than that I sent for a patterne.'

[1] This would be a 'miniature' portrait, painted on ivory or vellum.

Evidently Dorothy knew the London shops. She did, in fact, pay occasional visits to an aunt who lived in town. But her relations were usually so inquisitive about her, and so anxious to see her married, that she was always glad to get back into the country.

But her pleasant life at Chicksands came to a sudden end. In the winter of 1653 her father became seriously ill, and Dorothy, seeing that he could not live long, persuaded William to join his own father in Ireland, and to try to get a post which would bring him enough money to marry upon. (It was on this occasion that she asked for the engagement ring and the lock of hair.) No sooner had Temple gone, however, than Sir Peter died.

Chicksands became the property of Dorothy's eldest brother, and he, finding that he could not turn Dorothy from her determination to marry Temple, treated her, so she says, ' with so barbarous a cruelty that I am afriad I shall never look on him as brother more '. So until William should return from Ireland Dorothy went to live first with her aunt in London, and later with her brother-in-law, Sir James Peyton, in his country house in Kent. But the fashionable life of London, and the card playing and drinking of her brother-in-law's house, were alike hateful to her. Here are some extracts from her letters describing her life in Kent :

' What can you imagin we did this last week, when to our constant company there was added a Coll: and his ladye a son of his and two daughters, a mayde of honour to the Queen of Bohemia, and another Coll: or a major I know not w^{ch}, besides all the trayne they brought with them, the men the greatest drinkers that euer I saw, but in earnest there was more to bee pittyed besides vs, and that was Colonel Thornhils wife, as pritty a young woman as I haue seen . . . this innocent creature is sacrifised to the veryest beast that euer was, the first day she cam hither hee intended it seems to haue come with her, but did not

come till next night after and then soe drunk that hee was layd imediatly to bed whither she was to follow him when she had supped.'

Happily for Dorothy, Temple came back from Ireland in the autumn and the marriage was arranged. Just before it was to take place, Dorothy fell dangerously ill with small-pox. This was the disease of which every Englishman at this time stood in terror. Men are even said to have refused to marry women who had not had the small pox, less it should attack them after marriage and mar their beauty.

Dorothy recovered, but her face was marked for life. However, the loss of her good looks made no difference in Temple's affection. The marriage took place in London on Christmas Day, 1654, and after it the Temples went to live in Ireland. After spending about eight years in Ireland Dorothy and her husband came back to England. William made many voyages to the Continent on diplomatic errands. While he was away Dorothy amused herself with growing wall-fruits and trying to cultivate oranges. There were several children, but nearly all of them died young.

Dorothy died in 1695 and was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a tablet to her memory can still be seen. It is said that her husband's heart was broken by her loss. He died four years later and was buried beside his wife ; but his heart, according to his instructions, was placed in a silver box, and hidden under a sundial in the garden of Moor Park, where he and Dorothy had spent so many happy years.

We get still another glimpse of the life of a well-born seventeenth-century housewife from the letters of Margaret, wife to that Duke of Newcastle who lost his King a crown at the battle of Marston Moor. Margaret

Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, wrote poems, plays, and the well-known life of her husband, as well as a volume of 'Sociable letters' published in 1664. One of these letters speaks of home affairs.

'My thoughts, although not my actions, have been so busily employed about huswifry these three or four dayes, as I could think of nothing else.

'I sent for the governess of my house, and bid her give order to have flax and wheels bought, for I, with my maids, would sit and spin. The governess hearing me say so, smiled, I asked her the reason, she said, she smiled to think what uneven threads I would spin, for, said she, though Nature hath made you a spinster in poetry, yet education hath not made you a spinster in huswifry. I was very much troubled to hear what she said, for I thought spinning had been easie, as not requiring much skill to draw, and twist a thread, nay, so easie I thought it was, as I did imagine I should have spun so small, and even a thread, as to make pure fine linnen cloth, also, that my maids and I should make so much, as I should not have needed to buy any, either for household linnen, or shifts. Then I bid her leave me, to consider of some other work; and when I was by myself alone, I called into my mind several sorts of wrought works, most of which though I had will, yet I had no skill to work, for which I did inwardly complain of my education, that my mother did not force me to learn to work with a needle, though she found me alwayes unapt thereto; at last I pitched upon making of silk flowers, wherefore I sent for the governess of my house again, and told her, that I would have her buy several coloured silks, for I was resolved to imploy my time in making silk-flowers. She told me, she would obey my commands; but, said she, Madam, neither you, nor any that serves you, can do them so well, as those who make it their trade, wherefore you had better buy those toyes, if you desire them, for it will be an unprofitable employment, to wast time, with a double expence of mony. Then I told her I would preserve, for it was summer time, and the fruit fresh, and ripe upon the trees; she asked me for whom I would preserve, for I seldom did eat sweet-meats my self, nor make banquets for strangers, unless I meant to feed my houshold servants with them; besides, said she, you

THE ENGLISH HOVSE-WIFE,

Containing the inward and outward Vertues which ought to be in a compleate Woman.

As her skill in Phyſick, Surgery, Cookery, Extraction of Oyles, Banquetting ſtuffe, Ordering of great Feaſts, Preſerving of all ſorts of Wines, Conceited Secrets, Diſtilations, Perfumes, ordering of Wooll, Hempe, Flax, making Cloth, and Dying: the knowledge of Dayries, Office of Malting, of Oates, their excellent uſes in a Family, of Brewing, Baking, and all other things belonging to an Houſhold.

A Worke generally approved, and now the fifth time much augmented, purged and made moſt profitable and neceſſary for all men, and the generall good of this Kingdome.

By G. M.

LONDON,
Printed by *Anne Griffin* for *John Harriſon*, at the Golden Vnicorne in Pater-noſter-row. 1637.

may keep half a score servants with the mony that is laid out in sugar and coals, which go to the preserving only of a few sweetmeats, that are good for nothing but to breed obstructions, and rot the teeth. All which when I heard, I conceived she spoke reason ; at last I considered, that I and my maids had better be idle, than to employ time unprofitably, and to spend mony idely.'

It is almost impossible not to quote here Pepys's well-known description of the whimsical Duchess from his *Diary* of 26th April 1667.

' Met my Lady Newcastle going with her coachmen and footmen all in velvet : herself whom I never saw before, as I have heard her often described, for all the town-talk is now-a-days of her extravagancies, with her Velvet-Cap, her hair about her ears ; many black patches, because of pimples about her mouth ; naked-necked without any thing about it, and a black *just-au-corps*.'

Hardly an attractive picture this, but not without its value if only as a foil to set off the quiet wisdom and modest womanly grace of Dorothy Temple.

Women like Dorothy Osborne have always been rare, and women like the Duchess of Newcastle still rarer, fortunately. But the sweet virtues of Dorothy Osborne charm us again in Mrs. Hutchinson, wife of a Colonel in the Parliamentary army, who wrote her autobiography and a life of her husband, and in Margaret Godolphin, friend of John Evelyn and maid of honour to Queen Catherine, wife of Charles II.

A less known woman than any of the above is Mrs. Joyce Jeffries, who lived in Herefordshire during the Civil War ; but her diary, from which we shall make some extracts, exhibits even more clearly than Dorothy Osborne's letters the kind of life lived by country ladies in the seventeenth century. Mrs. Jeffries was well off without being rich, and in her younger days spent considerable sums on clothes and employed London

One of a pair of white kid gloves with gold embroidery presented to Queen Elizabeth, probably a glove from the six pairs given to her on the occasion of her visit to Oxford on Sept. 6th, 1566

2516·1 *Reproduced by the courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum* F

tailors to make them. She had in her wardrobe in 1638 a tawny camlet and kirtle trimmed and made at a cost of £10 17*s.* 5*d.*, a loose gown of black silk with a bodice and petticoat which cost £18 1*s.* 8*d.*, and a 'Polonia' coat and kirtle for which she paid £5 1*s.* 4*d.* Gloves seem to have been her pet extravagance; she had a pair made of Spanish leather, a pair of 'Sweet' gloves, and various embroidered gloves. She wore false curls which she crimped with curling irons, used spectacles, and carried a dog-whistle at her girdle when walking abroad.

Maidservants are mentioned in the diary; two had wages of £3 a year with a present of a dark stuff gown (light colours were for their betters) at Midsummer. The liveries of the menservants were made up in the house, probably by a visiting tailor at a cost of nearly nine pounds the suit. She was extremely generous to friends and dependants, and seems to have been god-mother to a small tribe of children, to all of whom she gave christening presents. Thus she gave a silver tankard to her god-daughter, Joyce Walsh, which cost £5 5*s.* 6*d.*, and paid '8*s.* at Heriford faier, for blue silk ribbon and taffetary lace for skarfs', another present for her god-children. Another entry in the diary runs:

'Childe borne called Joyce. Memorand. that my cosin Mrs. Jane Jeffrys, of Horncastle, was delivered of a daughter about a q'rter of an houre before 9 o'clock at night on Thirsday night, being Christmas eve's-eve, and ye 23rd day of December 1647; and hitt was baptised on ye Munday following, being St. John's day 27 day 1647, and named Joyce. Ould Mrs. Barckley and myself Joyse Jeffries were gossips. God blesse hit: Amen. Hit went home with nurce Nott to the Smeeths in greate Chelsey's parish, ye same Munday after diner, to nurce.

'December 27. Gave the midwyfe, good wyfe Hewes, of upper Tedston, the christening day, 10*s.*

'Munday. Gave nurce Nott, ye same day, 10*s.*'

It was far-seeing in Mrs. Jeffries's friends and kinsfolk to give their daughters the name of Joyce ; one fortunate little god-daughter, Joyce Lawrence, is down in Mrs. Jeffries's accounts for a 'silver bowle at 5*s*. 8*d*. an ounce'. But her charities were many and various ; she contributes for her servants as well as herself in the offertory at Easter communion ; pays the clerk's wife at All Saints Church, Hereford, for decking her pew with flowers at Eastertide ; and sends alms for the poor prisoners at 'Byster's Gate'. She gives rewards to the fiddlers at sheep shearing, to the wassailers at Christmas, and to the hinds who lighted the field-fires on Twelfth Night and toasted their mistress's health. 'Cherilickcome and his Jack-an-apes' and the man who had 'the dawncing horse' at Hereford fair, Midsummer, 1640, are both down in the diary for money gifts ; so is the watchman at the city gates, 'at several times' 9*d*., so is a poor woman : '1648, Oct. 29. For a pound of shugger to send Mrs. Easton when her son Fitz. Wm. lay on his death-bed, 20*d*.' Our unromantic age has forgotten St. Valentine's Day, but Mrs. Jeffries did not omit its due rites. Her 'valentines', however, cost her considerably less than her god-children. 'Gave Tom Aston for being my valentine 2*s*. Gave Mr. Dick Cravell, cam to be my valentine 1*s*.' Why plain Tom should have two shillings and 'Mr. Dick' only one we cannot profess to understand, but poor 'Timothy Pickering that was my valentine at Horncastle' fared even worse. Fourpence was his reward. Let us hope she wore on this particular Valentine's Day her beaver hat with a black silk band and the grass green stockings (worsted), which must have looked charming with the costly black silk gown, and perhaps consoled Timothy Pickering for being ranked as a fourpenny Valentine.

It would hardly be possible to find a greater contrast

to the homely pleasures of Mrs. Joyce Jeffries, nor a better illustration of the state and magnificence kept by a great lady in the early seventeenth century, than in the following letter written by the only daughter and heiress of a famous Lord Mayor of London. Eliza Spencer made a runaway match with Lord Compton, and at her father's death (1609) writes to her lord and husband telling him how she proposes to spend the old merchant's money.

My sweete Life,

'Now I have declared to you my mind for the settling of your state, I supposed that it were best for me to bethink, or consider with myself, what allowance were meetest for me. For, considering what care I ever had of your estate, and how respectfully I dealt with those, which, by the laws of God, of nature, and civil polity, wit, religion, government, and honesty, you, my dear, are bound to, I pray and beseech you to grant to me, your most kind and loving wife, the sum of £1600 *per ann.* quarterly to be paid.

'Also, I would (besides the allowance for my apparel) have £600 added yearly (quarterly to be paid) for the performance of charitable works, and those things I would not, neither will be accountable for.

'Also, I will have three horses for my own saddle, that none shall dare to lend or borrow: none lend but I; none borrow but you.

'Also, I would have two gentlewomen, lest one should be sick, or have some other lett. Also, believe that it is an indecent thing for a gentlewoman to stand mumping alone, when God hath blessed their lord and lady with a great estate.

'Also, when I ride a hunting, or hawking, or travel from one house to another, I will have them attending; so, for either of these said women, I must and will have for either of them a horse.

'Also, I will have six or eight gentlemen; and I will have my two coaches,—one lined with velvet, to myself, with four very fair horses, and a coach for my women, lined with cloth; one laced with gold, the other with scarlet, and laced with watch-lace and silver, with four good horses.

'Also, I will have two coachmen ; one for my own coach, the other for my women's.

'Also, at any time when I travel, I will be allowed, not only carriages and spare horses for me and my women, but I will have such carriages as shall be fitting for all, or duly ; not pestering my things with my women's, nor theirs with chambermaids', or their's with washmaids'.

'Also, for laundresses, when I travel, I will have them sent away with the carriages, to see all safe ; and the chambermaids I will have go before with the grooms, that the chambers may be ready, sweet, and clean.

'Also, for that it is indecent to crowd up myself with my gentleman usher in my coach, I will have him to have a convenient horse to attend me either in city or country ; and I must have two footmen ; and my desire is, that you defray all the charges for me.

'And, for myself, (besides my yearly allowance,) I would have twenty gowns of apparel ; six of them excellent good ones, eight of them for the country, and six others of them very excellent good ones.

'Also, I would have put into my purse £2000 and £200, and so you to pay my debts.

'Also, I would have £6000 to buy me jewels, and £4000 to buy me a pearl chain.

'Now, seeing I have been and am so reasonable unto you, I pray you do find my children apparel, and their schooling ; and all my servants, men and women, their wages.

'Also, I will have all my houses furnished, and all my lodging-chambers to be suited with all such furniture as is fit ; as beds, stools, chairs, suitable cushions, carpets, silver warming pans, cupboards of plate, fair hangings, and such like. So, for my drawing-chamber, in all houses, I will have them delicately furnished, both with hangings, couch, canopy, glass, chairs, cushions, and all things thereunto belonging.

'So, now that I have declared to you what I would have, and what that is I would not have, I pray, when you be an earl, to allow me £1000 more than now desired, and double attendance.'

'Your loving wife,
'Eliza Compton.'

No doubt Mrs. Jeffries was much nearer to the average country lady in the seventeenth century than Eliza Compton, or even than Dorothy Osborne, Lucy Hutchinson, and Mary Godolphin. Writing towards the end of the century John Evelyn looks back with regret upon the women whom he had known in his youth.

'Men [he writes] courted and chose their wives for their modesty, frugality, keeping at home, good housewifery, and other economical virtues then in reputation, and the young damsels were taught all these in the country in their parent's houses. . . . The virgins and young ladies of that golden age put their hands to the spindle, nor disdained they the needle; were helpful to their parents, instructed in the management of a family, and gave promise of making excellent wives.'

At least one poet of 'that golden age' would have agreed very heartily with Evelyn's praise of the domestic virtues.

> Domestic charge doth best that sex befit,
> Contiguous bus'ness, so to fix the mind.

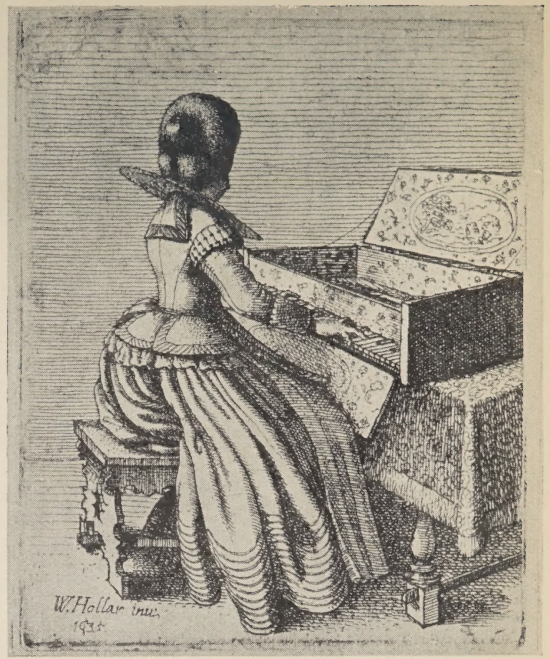
Although this same poet in speaking of the country-girls would allow a measure of 'honest pastime' and 'thinks not the bones of the dead any bruised, or the Worse for it, though the country lasses dance in the church-yard after evensong.' The title-page printed on p. 63 would seem to show that the 'country lasses' might stand in some need of recreation.

It is usual for old men to think that women are not what they once were; moreover, Evelyn had a very high standard for women, how high may well be seen from his pathetic picture of his own daughter, Mary, who died in early womanhood. The extract is from Evelyn's diary, and it has a double value as one of the best character sketches in our language, and as a portrait of the ideal seventeenth-century lady.

LONDON.
Printed for
Michaell Sparke
and are to be
Sould, at the
Blew Bible,
in
Greene Arbor.
1631.
Will: Marshall fec.

'She had read and digested a considerable deal of history and of places [geography]. The French tongue was as familiar to her as the English; she understood Italian, and was able to render a laudable account of what she read and observed, to which assisted a most faithful memory and discernment; and she did make very prudent and discreet reflections upon what she had observed of the conversations among which she had at any time been, which being continually of persons of the best quality, she thereby improved. She had an excellent voice, to which she played a thorough base on the harpsicord, in both which she arrived to that perfection, that of scholars of those famous two masters, Signor Pietro and Bartholomeo, she was esteemed the best, for the sweetness of her voice and management of it added such an agreeableness to her countenance, without any constraint or concern, that when she sung, it was as charming to the eye as to the ear; this I rather note, because it was a universal remark, and for which so many noble and judicious persons in music desired to hear her, the last being at Lord Arundel of Wardour's. . . . She never played at cards without extreme importunity, and for the company; but this was so very seldom, that I cannot number it among anything she could name a fault. No one could read prose or verse better or with more judgment; and, as she read, so she writ, not only most correct orthography, [but] with that maturity of judgment and exactness of the periods, choice of expressions, and familiarity of style, that some letters of hers have astonished me and others to whom she had occasionally written. She had a talent of rehearsing any comical part or poem, as, to them she might be decently free with, was more pleasing than heard on the theatre. She danced with the greatest grace I have ever seen, and so would her master say, who was Monsieur Isaac; but she seldom showed that perfection, save in gracefulness of her carriage, which was with an air of sprightly modesty not easily to be described. Nothing affected, but natural and easy in her deportment as in her discourse, which was always material, not trifling, and to which the extraordinary sweetness of her tone, even in familiar speaking, was very charming. Nothing was so pretty as her descending to play with little children, whom she would caress and humour with great delight. But she was most affected to be with grave and sober men, of whom she might

From the Title-page of 'Parthenia'



From Hollar's engraving of 1635

Playing the Virginals

learn something and improve herself. I have been assisted by her in reading and praying by me ; comprehensive of uncommon notions, curious of knowing everything to some excess, had I not sometimes repressed it. Nothing was so delightful to her as to go to my study, where she would willingly have spent whole days, for, as I said, she had read abundance of history, and all the best poets.

' Oh dear, sweet, and desirable child.'

Such women as we have been speaking of spent most of their time in the country.

Let us now consider more particularly the life of a town housewife in seventeenth-century London.

In the year 1660 there lived in Axe Yard—a quiet little street leading out of King Street, Westminster—Samuel Pepys, his wife, Elizabeth, and their ' serving wench ', Jane. Samuel was twenty-eight years old. Elizabeth was twenty ; Jane's age we do not know. Elizabeth and Samuel had been married for five years. The wedding took place in 1655, when Elizabeth was only fifteen years old. Early marriages for women were quite common at that time ; a well-known proverb said, ' A girl of fifteen is as old as a boy of twenty-one '.

Probably Elizabeth at fifteen had been glad to marry and settle down in a house of her own. Her father, a Frenchman, was a ' rolling stone ' and a ne'er-do-well, and Elizabeth before her marriage had led a wandering life in France, except for a few years which she spent with her mother's relations in Devonshire. She spoke French better than she did English, and would rather read a French book than an English one. She could hardly spell, wrote badly, and knew no arithmetic. Sometimes when she tried to write letters to her friends she made so many mistakes, and Samuel became so angry about them, that Elizabeth would burst into tears and tear the

A Gentleman has enquired of me for a reputable Gentlewoman about 30 Years old, of good Breeding, Comlineſs, Prudence and 5 or 600 *l.* in Money, Land or Joynture; Such One his friend would match with, tho' on the Square he deſerves far more Fortune, which he minds leſs than his good Likeing.

†‡† *I have undertaken to Advertize all ſorts of things that are honourable; and what follows, is not otherwiſe, and I am well paid for it.*

☞ A Gentleman about 30 Years of Age, that ſays He has a Very Good Eſtate, would willingly Match Himſelf to ſome Good Young Gentlewoman, that has a Fortune of 3 000 *l.* or thereabout, and he will make Settlement to Content.

VVhen it ſhall appear that I am Candid, and no otherwiſe concerned than in bringing two Elderly Perſons to a Treaty; and the Nine Days VVonder and Laughter (uſually attending new things) are over, and that no body ſhall know any thing of the matter, but where I ſhall reaſonably believe they are in good earneſt; then 'tis probable ſuch Advertiſements may prove very uſeful.

A Young Man about 25 Years of Age, in a very good Trade, and whoſe Father will make him worth 1000*l.* would willingly embrace a ſuitable Match. He has been brought up a Diſſenter, with his Parents, and is a ſober Man.

I Thought what I ſaid before about Matches, was very intelligent; but I find otherwiſe: The Caſe is thus.

A. comes to me and ſays, his Friend has a Kinſman that he would be glad to have match'd; and he is a ſober, well-bred, comely, underſtanding Man, and in ſo good an Employment, that with his Fortune he ſhall deſerve a Vertuous, well bred, diſcreet, comely Wife, with a Fortune of 1000 *l* but his Kinſman has not much Acquaintance and is baſhful. This I publiſh, and then comes a Gentleman and ſays his Friend has a Kinſwoman qualified as above, and he would gladly match her to ſuch if it be real: Upon this I bring the Two that ſpeak to me, together, and if they can underſtand each other, they carry on the Match; and if it ſucceeds, I ſhall expect ſome ſmall Conſideration; and this is what I intend to be concern'd in the matter.

The Marriage Market

Various advertisements from Houghton's 'Collection' for 1695

letters up. Worse still, she knew very little about housekeeping, and was untidy and unmethodical. Samuel, who was the most businesslike of men, kept a diary and each evening wrote up the events of the day. During the first few years of their married life he constantly makes remarks in his diary about his wife's shortcomings, and about the 'sluttish and dirty' state of the house. He finds her clothes carelessly laid up. She puts half a crown away in so safe a place that she cannot possibly find it. He quarrels with her, when they are riding together in a coach, because her ribbons are ill-matched and of two colours. 'On Sunday morning, my wife not being dressed as I would have her I was angry, and when she was out of doors on her way to Church, returned home again vexed.' Or we hear of Elizabeth burning her hand when dressing a turkey, sending the Sunday joint to table raw on a day when guests were expected, preparing a fowl for roasting and finding it too large to go into the oven, and, in the depth of winter, allowing her supplies of coals to run completely out. One Sunday Samuel writes: 'My wife and I all alone to a leg of mutton, the sauce of which being made sweet I was angry at it and ate none, only dined upon the marrow bone that we had beside.' And another day: 'Home to dinner, and there I took occasion, from the blackness of the meat as it came out of the pot, to fall out with my wife and my maid for their sluttery, and so left the table.'

Elizabeth at twenty was in a great many ways only a child. Every year on St. Valentine's Day she was as excited as could be to know who was to be her Valentine and got up specially early to find out. At Christmas she would stay up all night with her maids, playing cards, and blind man's buff, and childish games which Pepys professed to scorn.

One Christmas Eve he writes : ' I went to bed, leaving my wife and all her folks, and Will (Samuel's brother) also, come to make Christmas gambols tonight.' And the next day : ' My wife to bed at eight o'clock in the morning which vexed me a little, but I believe there was no hurt in it at all, but only mirth, and therefore took no notice.'

On May Day Elizabeth insisted on keeping up the old country custom of bathing her face in the dew in order to keep herself beautiful. To do this she had to leave Westminster and go into the open country, but in 1660 green fields began much nearer to Westminster than they do now. Nevertheless, in 1669, when Elizabeth called her maid up at three o'clock in the morning Samuel was ' troubled for fear of any hurt happening to her going abroad so betimes '.

Elizabeth had no children, and for many years after her marriage this was a great disappointment to her. She consoled herself somewhat with her little dog, to which she was devoted, and which Pepys unfeelingly threatened to throw out of the window, because she made such a mess of the house. For the first few years of their married life the Pepyses lived happily enough. Samuel walked every day from Axe Yard to the Navy Office in Whitehall, where he worked. Sometimes there was not work enough to keep him all day and he came home early. He spent his spare time as a man about town—drinking in taverns, going to theatres, keeping low company, and visiting his friends. So Jane and Elizabeth had the house in Axe Yard very much to themselves. It was a small house and they could manage the work easily enough, though neither of them was very skilled. They were most busy on washing day, which came round once a fortnight. They usually put the clothes ready on Sunday night, got

up early on Monday morning, and often washed all day and far into Monday night. One Monday, for example, Pepys writes in his diary as follows : ' Home, where I found my wife and maid a washing. I stayed up till the bellman came by with his bell, just under my window, as I was writing of this very line, and cried, " past one of the clock and a cold, frosty, windy morning." I then went to bed, and left my wife and the maid a washing still.' Sometimes, but not on washing days, the cooking gave both Jane and Elizabeth plenty to do. Appetites were large in the seventeenth century, and many dishes were served at one meal ; cooking was elaborate, and meals lasted a long time. Nowadays most people only over-eat on Christmas Day, but Pepys and his friends seem to have over-eaten whenever they could afford it. In 1660 Samuel had none too much money to spend on food. He was earning only £50 a year. Though this was worth from six to ten times as much as it would be nowadays, it did not allow Elizabeth much for house-keeping, as Samuel spent a great deal of money on his own clothes and pleasures. But six months later Pepys was earning seven times as much, and began giving dinners to his friends.

Dinner was by far the most important meal of the day. Breakfast we hardly hear anything about. Tea and coffee were only just coming into use—Pepys mentions the first occasion which he tasted tea. For supper Jane and Elizabeth usually had something like a slice of brawn and a glass of ale. But dinner often consisted of seven or eight courses and lasted several hours. The diners frequently became drunk and Pepys himself was usually ill afterwards.

Preparations for a dinner party began overnight or else very early on the morning of the feast. Sometimes

The fourth edition enlarged 1684

a cook came in for the day to help and Pepys could never go to the office with a quiet mind until he knew that the meat had arrived, the fires were lit, the tables laid, and the cooking under way.

For the first party which he ever gave Pepys borrowed a room from Lord Sandwich, his chief at the Navy Office, and table-linen, coals, and logs had to be carried from Axe Yard to Lord Sandwich's house. On the night before the feast Pepys writes in his diary :

'Thence went to my Lords, and got most things ready against tomorrow, as fires and laying the cloth, and my wife was making of her tarts and larding of her pullets till eleven o'clock.'

And on the next day :

'Home from my office to my Lords lodgings, where my wife had got ready a very fine dinner—viz. a dish of marrow bones, a leg of mutton, a loin of veal, a dish of fowl, three pullets and two dozen of larks all in a dish, a great tart, a neat's tongue, a dish of anchovies, a dish of prawns and cheese.'

When Pepys had moved from Axe Yard into their larger house, a still grander meal was given, and for this Samuel bought 'a dozen of napkins of diaper the first that ever I bought in my life'. Here is his account of the day :

'Things being put in order, and the wife come, I went to the office, where we sat till noon and then broke up, and I home, whither come all my guests. I had for them, after oysters, at first course, a hash of rabbits, a lamb and a rare chine of beef ; next a great dish of roasted fowl, cost me about thirty shillings, and a tart,—and then fruit and cheese. My dinner was noble and enough. I had my house mighty clean and neat. My room below with a good fire in it ; my dining room above, and my chamber being made a withdrawing chamber, and in my wife's a good fire also. I find my new table very proper, and will hold nine or ten people well, but eight with great room. After dinner the women to cards in my wifes chamber and the Doctor and

Ein Englische Adell
Mulier Generosa Anglica.
Des Herrn Maiors oder Burgemeisters Frau zu London
D.ni Maioris sive Prætoris Londinensis Vxoris ha
English Gentle-Woman
Mulier Generosa Anglica.

'*Mulier Generosa Anglica.*' *From drawings by Hollar, 1643*

Mr. Pierce in mine, because the dining room smokes unless I keep a good charcoal fire, which I was then not provided with. At night to supper, had a good sack posset and cold meat, and sent my guests away about ten oclock at night, both them and myself highly pleased with our management of this day. So weary to bed. I believe this day's feast will cost me near £5.'

It is not to be wondered at that between these feasts Pepys and his wife had economical spells, when they dined in the garret off pease porridge, the remains of a turkey, a sheep's head, or a dish of sheep's trotters. But when money was plentiful Samuel and Elizabeth would sit down to two, or even three, fowls between them, and leave very little on the dish. It is likely, however, that fowls in 1660 were much smaller than they are to-day.

If for any reason Elizabeth did not wish to cook, there were plenty of cookshops, 'boiling cooks' they were called, where people could either get ready-cooked meals or could take their own food and have it prepared. Once, for example, when Samuel and Elizabeth were without a maid they went into the City together, 'and in Fish St. my wife and I bought a bit of salmon for eightpence and went into the Sun Tavern and ate it'.

Mrs. Pepys seems to have done very little sewing. Sometimes on special occasions—for example when her husband was gone for a sea trip at short notice—she and Jane would sit up late mending his clothes, making him a cap to wear on board, or finishing a knitted pair of stockings. But her own clothes were usually made by a professional dressmaker. She spent, however, a great deal of time, thought, and money on her clothes, and often came to words, and even to blows, with her husband about them. Pepys paid all bills and kept all accounts himself. Once, reckoning up at the end of a quarter, he

found that he had spent £55 on his own clothes and £12 on his wife's, and he evidently regretted the £12 much more than he did the £55.

Hence there was constant quarrelling over money matters, especially whenever Elizabeth spent anything without her husband's permission. On one occasion Pepys writes : 'At home, and find my wife of her own accord to have laid out twenty five shillings upon a pair of pendants for her ears which did vex me and brought both me and her to very high words. I vowed to break them or that she should go and get what she could for them again.' And in fact poor Elizabeth did send Jane back to the shop with the jewels, but when Samuel saw Jane start on the errand he relented and allowed Elizabeth to keep them. And another day : 'This morning I took my wife towards Westminster, and landed her at Whitefriars to buy her a petticoat', and Pepys went on to the office. 'By and by comes my wife to tell me that her father has persuaded her to buy a most fine cloth of twenty six shillings a yard, and a rich lace, that the petticoat will come to five pounds at least ; at which I was somewhat troubled, but she doing it very innocently I could not be angry.'

In the end both Samuel and Elizabeth came to see that a regular allowance was the only way out of the trouble. Elizabeth made the suggestion first. On the 3rd January 1669 Pepys writes : 'So home, and there my wife and I treating about coming to an allowance for my wife for clothes, and there I out of my natural backwardness did hang off, which vexed her.' But the next day : 'Lay long talking with my wife and did of my own accord come to an allowance with her of £30 a year for clothes and everything, which she was mightily pleased with, it being more than ever she wished or expected.'

£30 a year would be nearer £300 in our money, and yet the following extract shows clearly that Elizabeth would have little difficulty in spending much more than Samuel's allowance. It is a rhyming catalogue of the fancies of a lady of fashion in the time of the Stuarts :

Chains, coronets, pendans, bracelets and ear-rings ;
Pins, girdles, spangles, embroyderies, and rings ;
Shadowes, rebatoes, ribbands, ruffs, cuffs, falls,
Scarfes, feathers, fars, maskes, muffs, laces, cauls,
Thin biffaries, cobweb lawn, and fardingals,
Sweet fals, vayles, wimples, glasses, crisping pins,
Pots of ointment, combes, with poking sticks, and bodkines,
Coyfes, gorgets, fringes, rowles, fillets, and hair-laces,
Silks, damasks, velvets, tinsels, cloth of gold,
Of tissues with colours of a hundred fold
But in her tyres,[1] so new-fangled is she,
That which doth with her humour now agree,
To morrow she dislikes ; now does she sweare
That a loose body is the neatest weare ;
But ere an hour be gone she will protest
A straight gowne graces her proportion best ;
Now in her hat, then in her hair is drest ;
Now, of all fashions, she thinks change the best :
Nor in her weeds [2] alone is she so nice
But rich perfumes she buys at any price ;
Storax and spikenard she burns in her chamber,
And daubs herself with civet, musk and amber.

The verses are taken from a play first acted at Norwich a little before Mrs. Pepys's time, but the fashions worn by Elizabeth Pepys were quite as costly and as changeable. Indeed a later play makes mention of ' nightrails ' [nightgowns] costing forty pounds each, a price which would have staggered the good Samuel. But it should be remembered that fine ladies in Pepys's day often received

[1] Attire, that is.

[2] Clothes.

'Nobilis Mulier Anglicana.' *From drawings by Hollar, 1643*

'Now of all fashions she thinks change the best.' *'Rhodon and Iris.'* *A dramatic pastoral first acted May 3, 1631*

visitors in their nightgowns, and doubtless they desired to be seen ' with envy by the visitants '.

Just as Pepys controlled his wife's expenditure on clothes, so he attempted to control her taste by the simple but not very effective method of forbidding her to wear what displeased him.

' This day my wife began to wear light coloured locks, quite white almost, which, though it makes her look very pretty, yet, not being natural, vexes me, that I will not have her wear them.'

' My wife seemed very pretty today, it being the first time I had given her leave to wear a black patch.'

' So to the change, and hence home, where my wife and I fell out, about my not being willing to have her gown laced, but would levy out the same money and more on a plain new one. At this she flounced away in a manner I never saw her, nor which I could ever endure.'

Pepys had an artist's eye for colour and at times approved of his wife's taste in clothes. Certain entries in his diary give us a very good idea of women's fashions in this age of ' powder and patches '.

' Down to dinner, where my wife in her new lace whisk, which indeed is very noble, and I much pleased with it.'

' This day my wife put on her black silk gown, which is now laced all over with black gimp lace, as the fashion is in which she is very pretty.'

' With my wife by coach to the New Exchange, to buy her some things, where we saw some new fashion petticoats of sarcenet, with a broad black lace printed round the bottom and before, very handsome, and my wife had a mind to one of them, but we did not then buy one.'

' At home I found my wife in her new suit of black sarcenet and yellow petticoat, very pretty.'

' This day my wife put on her slashed waistcoat, which is very pretty.'

' This night my wife had a new suit of flowered ash-coloured silk, very noble.'

Seventeenth-Century London Cry

The Haberdasher early in the seventeenth century

'Thy gown? why, ay: come tailor, let us see't.' The Taming of the Shrew.

So much in fact did Pepys admire his pretty wife that he was willing at much expense to have her portrait painted.

'My wife and I this morning, to the painters, and there she sat the last time, and I stood by and did tell him some little things to do, that now her picture I think will please me very well, and after her, her little black dog sat in her lap and was drawn, which made us very merry.'

Unfortunately, however, Elizabeth was not always very merry. She was often lonely, and found time hanging heavily on her hands. Unlike Dorothy Osborne, she had neither the beauties of nature nor the things of the mind to console her. She took no interest in the scientific discoveries of which all London at this time was talking. Samuel knew all about these. He visited observatories and looked at the stars through great telescopes; he attended lectures on the structure of the human body; he saw a human arm introduced into a vacuum, and 'there swell to twice its usual size'; he went to laboratories to see experiments conducted; he visited the Royal Mint and there saw coins made, and at a glass works he saw glass vessels blown and shaped. Women were not supposed to care for such things, and it did not occur to Pepys to tell his wife about them—still less to take her with him on any of these occasions.

The result was that Elizabeth went out very little. There were occasional shopping expeditions with Jane. Sometimes at midday they would go by coach to the Royal Exchange or to St. Paul's Churchyard, where the best shops were to be found, to buy clothes. Sometimes they would get up very early, before breakfast, to buy meat and vegetables at the big markets—Smithfield and Covent Garden. One night when Pepys was giving a dinner party on the morrow he wrote in his diary: 'Home,

and found my wife's new gown come home and she mightily pleased with it. But I appeared very angry that there were no more things got ready against to-morrow's feast, and in that passion sat up long and went discontented to bed.' So the next day we hear that ' my poor wife rose by five o'clock in the morning before day, and went to market and bought fowls and many other things for dinner, with which I was highly pleased '.

But most of the household shopping was done by Elizabeth from her front doorstep. Her dressmaker, milliner, tailor, and hairdresser all called on her. Their coming was something of an event, and they were often asked to stay to dinner.

Elizabeth rarely went out alone—London streets at this time were not safe for women. Sometimes her father would call for her and take her out. Sometimes she paid a visit to her mother. Occasionally she was a guest at a wedding or christening party. Sometimes on Sunday she and Samuel would go together and dine with a friend. But, generally speaking, Elizabeth was a home bird.

Nowadays such a life would be considered unhealthy, but in 1660 fresh air and exercise were not thought so essential as they are now. Houses were often built with balconies, verandas, flat roofs, or long windows opening to the ground, so that the inmates could take the air without venturing into the streets. When the Pepyses left Axe Yard and moved into a new house Samuel had a flat, leaded roof built, and he and Elizabeth spent many fine moonlight nights walking, singing, and playing the violin on the leads, to the great delight (so Pepys says) of the neighbours.

When Elizabeth did go out she hardly ever walked; the streets were far too dirty. Once we hear of her going with Samuel to pay a visit on foot, and then she was

' greatly troubled with a pair of new pattens '. These were iron rings worn on the soles of the shoes to keep the feet out of the dirt. There is a pair on the feet of the old woman on p. 367. On this occasion Samuel was ' vexed to go so slow, it being late '. But usually Elizabeth would hire a sedan chair—carried on long poles by two men—or one of the hackney coaches which in 1660 were coming into fashion. Rich people at this time kept their own coach, coachman, and horses. Samuel and Elizabeth could not afford one in 1660, but eight years later they bought one and were extremely proud of it. On the 20th October 1668 Samuel tells us they were ' mighty busy dressing up our best chamber and thinking of a coach and coachman, horses, etc.' And two days before Christmas of that year they took their first ride together in their own coach. Here is Pepys's account of it : ' Home to dinner, and then with my wife alone abroad, with our new horses, the beautifullest almost that ever I saw, and the first time they ever carried her, and me but once. But we are mighty proud of them.'

On May Day of the next year there took place an expedition which must always have remained a happy memory for both. Here is Samuel's account of it :

' Up betimes. Called up by my tailor and there first put on a summer suit this year ; but it was not my fine one of flowered tabby vest and coloured camelot tunic, because it was too fine with the gold lace at the hands and I was afeard to be seen in it ; but put on the stuff suit I made last year, which is now repaired, and so did go to the office in it and sat all morning. At noon home to dinner, and there find my wife extraordinary fine, with her flowered tabby gown that she made two years ago, now laced, exceeding pretty ; and she would have me put on my fine suit, which I did and so anon we went alone through the town, with our new liveries of serge, and the horses' manes and tails tied with red ribbons, and the standards gilt with varnish, and all clean and

green reins, that people did mightily look upon us, and the truth is I did not see any coach more pretty than ours all the day.'

In country districts at this time people travelled mainly on horseback. Elizabeth when a child in Devonshire had learned to ride, and once when Pepys was going on a journey to Ware he tells us that

'my wife with a few words got me to hire her a horse to go along with me. So she and I took coach to the end of the town and there I got upon my horse and she upon her pretty mare that

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AT the upper End of St. *James's-Place* in *Roſſington-ſtreet* is a very fair well-built Houſe to be ſold, having four Rooms and a Cloſet on a Floor, all curiouſly finiſhed, with many Conveniences below Stairs, having a *Tarras-Walk* on St. *James's-Park* Wall, and a Door into the *Park*, a flat and Summer-houſe, on the Top of the Houſe, and a Stable for 4 Horſes, and Coach-houſe for 2 Coaches adjoining it. I can tell farther.

An advertisement of a house with a flat leaded roof and summerhouse, the modern 'roof-garden'. From Houghton's 'Collection' for Feb. 28, 1695/6

I hired for her, and she rides very well. But the mare at one time falling she got a fall but no harm. So we got to Ware and there supped, and to bed very merry and pleasant.'

The dullest times of all for Elizabeth were the times when her husband was away on business. Apparently he did not think it safe to leave Elizabeth in charge of the house, so it would be locked up, and she packed off into the country to a friend, or to her father, until her husband got back. Elizabeth determined finally to have a companion. Pepys writes in his diary :

'Home, and to supper and to bed, and a little before and after we had much talk and difference between us about my wife's having a woman, which I seemed much angry at, that she should go so far in it without consideration and my being consulted with.'

And the next day :

'Up, and began our discontent again, and sorely angered my wife, who do indeed live very lonely, but I do perceive that it is want of work that do make her and all of her people think of ways of spending their time worse.'

For this reason, apparently, Pepys set to work deliberately to make work for his wife inside the house. This is what he says :

'Up, after much pleasant talk with my wife and a little that vexes me, for I see that she is confirmed in it that my very keeping the house in dirt, and the doing of this and anything else in the house, is but to find her employment, and to keep her within and from minding of her pleasure, in which, though I am sorry to see she minds it, is true enough in a great degree.'

For a little while the move into a new and larger house in Whitehall provided the much-needed 'work'. There was furniture to be bought—a new mahogany table for the dining-room, pictures, mirrors, and hangings for her own closet, and fittings for the best blue chamber. Parquet floors were laid down and a new staircase built. The house was made a storey higher and a flat leaded roof laid. New and finer table linen was wanted, and the new oven had to be tested and improved. It was a most uncomfortable time and made Elizabeth thoroughly discontented. The workmen kept the house in a constant state of dirt and confusion. Pepys complains : 'My wife forbore to make herself clean, but continued in a sluttish condition until tomorrow.' Meals were brought from the cookshop while the oven was being fitted, and Elizabeth could not get into her own bedroom for many months.

In the end Pepys gave way and engaged a companion for Elizabeth, hoping, as he says, that she would be 'good entertainment for my wife without much cost'.

ONE who has lived with an Eminent *Gentleman* whom I very well know, twice, and the laſt time 4 Years, deſires to wait on ſome *Gentlewoman*, or to be a Houſekeeper either to a married or ſingle Man. She is of good Underſtanding, and towards 30, and can have from her Maſter and others as good Commendations as can be deſired. She can *raiſe Paſte, make Sweet-meats, Pickle* and work well with her Needle.

A Widower that has a good Houſe and two Young Daughters, would have to board with him, a Man an his Wife or a Widow of good Reputation and Education, to be as Company for his Daughters; and he will board them at very reaſonable Rates.

A Gentleman, a Juſtice of Peace, that is Aged, having none in Family but his Lady and two Servants, would take a pritty Youth that can write and read, and is good Condition. This ſhall be his Clerk, and wait on him, and he will reckon him as his Child, find him all Conveniencies, and without giving him any preſent Wages, be obliged when he dies to give him ten Pound for every Year he ſhall live with him; and if he pleaſes him well give him a better Peny, beſides the Vails he ſhall have as Clerk or otherwiſe.

Alſo if a Careful Widow, or Staid Maid will wait on the Lady, beſides ſome Clothes, ſhe ſhall have 3 *l.* 10 *s.* the firſt year, and every year after ſhall be advanc'd 20 *s.*

IF any wants a Houſekeeper, I can help to a Gentlewoman who through Misfortune of a bad Husband is reduced: She is about 50, has been bred well, lived moſt of her time in *Newcaſtle*, her Husband was a Merchant, her Children are abroad and able to provide for themſelves; She is ſober, diligent, and careful, and has been uſed to all manner of Buſineſs fit for a Houſekeeper, as alſo to riſe early and ſit up late, and can have any Security; I can tell farther.

'*Situations Vacant*'

Advertisements from Houghton's 'Collection', 1697–8

But partly because Pepys, though fond of his wife, was too easily attracted by other women, and partly because Elizabeth was given to jealousy, the experiment was not a success and the companion had to be dismissed.

So Pepys had to find some other way of making his wife happy. Two things he saw were necessary—to give her more of his own company and to educate her so that she might have new ways of spending her time happily. So he took to reading aloud to her in the evenings. He began to take her to see plays instead of going himself alone. He encouraged her to take singing and dancing lessons, and undertook to teach her more serious subjects himself. Here are some passages from the diary at this time :

'Some time I spent this morning beginning to teach my wife some scale in music, and found her apt beyond imagination.'

'Sat up late, teaching my wife her music lesson, in which I take great pleasure.'

'This morning my wife and I lay long in bed, and among other things fell into talk of music, and desired that I would let her learn to sing, which I did consider, and promised her that she should. So before I rose word was brought me that my singing master was come to teach me. And so she rose and this morning began to learn also.'

'Dined with my wife, and then to talk again, chiefly about her learning to dance against her going next year into the country, which I am willing she shall do.'

'Dined at noon at home, where a little angry with my wife for minding nothing now but the dancing master, having him come twice a day, which is folly.'

'Abroad, and among other places to Moxon's, and there bought a pair of globes cost me £3–10–0, with which I am well pleased, I buying them principally for my wife, who has a mind to understand them and I shall take pleasure to teach her.'

'This evening after I came home I began to enter my wife in arithmetique, in order to her studying of the globes, and she takes it very well, and I hope with great pleasure, I shall bring her to understand many fine things.'

Character 57.

Of a School of young Gentlewomen.

TO ſhew how far they are remov'd from Court-breeding, their Schools moſt commonly are erected in ſome Countrey Village nigh the Town, where to ſave charges, they have the worſt Maſters as can be got for Love or money, learning to *quaver* inſtead of ſinging, *hop* inſtead of dancing, and *rumble* the *Virginals*, *ſcratch* the *Lute*, and *rake* the *Ghitar*, inſtead of playing neatly and handſomely. As for their Languages, a Magpie in a *moneth* would learn to *chatter* more then they do in a *year*. And for their Behaviour, it is nothing elſe but a low Courtzie, with a bridling caſt of their Chin to fetch it up agen.

The Seventeenth-century School Curriculum
From Shadwell's 'Characters'

A Dame School

'They grieven sore in piteous durance pent
Awed by the power of the relentless dame.'
Shenstone. 'The Schoolmistress'

'After dinner with my wife to her study, and there read some more arithmetique, which she takes with great ease and pleasure.'

'My wife and I all the afternoon at arithmetique, and she is come to do addition, multiplication and subtraction very well, and so I purpose not to trouble her with division, but to begin with the globes to her now.'

'Yesterday began my wife to learn to limn [paint] of one Browne, which Mr. Hill helps her to, and by her beginning upon some eyes, I think she will do very fine things, and I shall take great delight in it.'

'Up, and saw and admired my wife's picture of our Saviour, now finished, which is very pretty.'

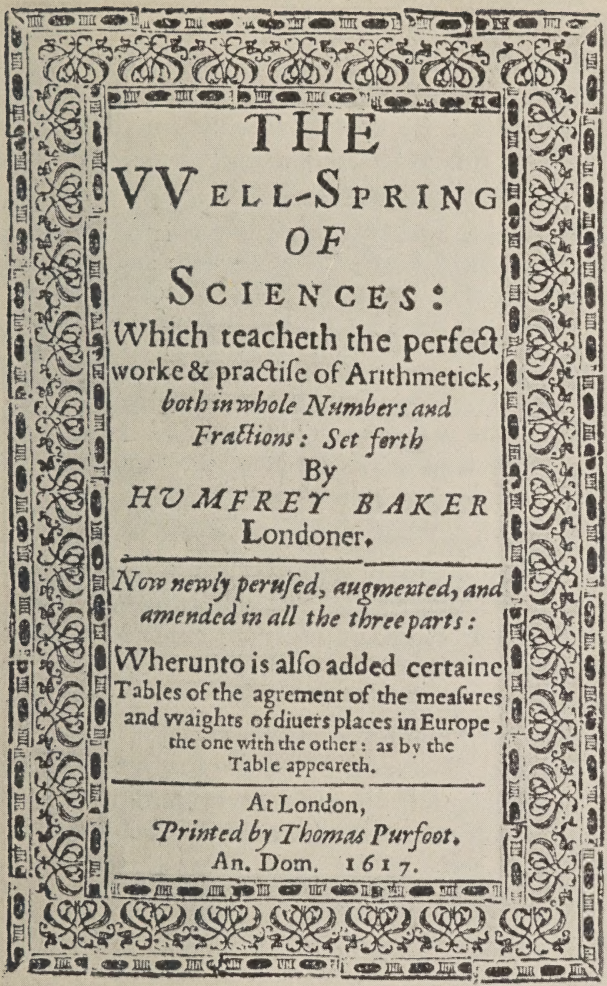
Pepys's plan for his wife's education is perhaps more notable for what he leaves out than for what he puts in. We shall speak of women's education, more particularly in the eighteenth century, in a succeeding chapter. The extract on p. 95 (which dates from the later seventeenth century) will show that there was plenty of work for eighteenth-century teachers of women to set their hands to.

Just as Elizabeth had become, in Samuel's opinion, too fond of the dancing-master, so now he thinks she spends too much time on painting :

'At noon home, and troubled to see my wife minding her painting, and not thinking of her house business, this being the first day of her beginning the second time to paint.'

'Home, and had a great fray with my wife again about Browne's coming to teach her to paint, and sitting with me at table, which I will not yield to.'

The 'great fray' about Browne was followed by the most serious quarrel which Elizabeth and Samuel ever had in their lives. Jane had left, and a great many other maids had come and gone. Of the two maids whom Pepys kept at this time one, Deborah Willett, was particularly attractive and pretty, and Pepys fell in love with



THE VVELL-SPRING OF SCIENCES:

Which teacheth the perfect worke & practise of Arithmetick, *both in whole Numbers and Fractions: Set forth*

By

HVMFREY BAKER

Londoner.

Now newly perused, augmented, and amended in all the three parts:

Wherunto is also added certaine Tables of the agrement of the measures and waights of diuers places in Europe, the one with the other: as by the Table appeareth.

At London,
Printed by Thomas Purfoot.
An. Dom. 1617.

Title-page of a seventeenth-century Arithmetic Book

her. Elizabeth discovered this and was angry. Pepys, though it took him a long time to get over his fondness for Deb, was both sorry and ashamed, and in the mood to agree to everything that his wife could wish for. (It was at this time that Elizabeth got her dress allowance.) The quarrel lasted a long time, and at the end Pepys wrote in his diary :

'Nov: 19th, 1668. So before it was late there was, beyond my hopes as well as desert, a durable peace and so to supper, and pretty kind words, and to bed, I being most absolutely resolved never to give her occasion while I live of more trouble of this or any other kind, there being no curse in the world so great as this of the difference between myself and her, and therefore I do, by the grace of God, promise never to offend her more, and did this night begin to pray to God upon my knees alone in my chamber which God knows I cannot yet do heartily, but I hope God will give me the grace more and more every day to fear Him and be true to my poor wife.'

The ' durable peace ' was celebrated by a trip abro[illegible] — for which Elizabeth had longed all her ma[illegible]. Before they left England, Samuel came to a sad [illegible]. His eyes, which had been failing for some time, w[illegible] so weak that he resolved to give up the beloved diary, which he had kept for nine years. He could no longer see to write it. No sooner had the Pepyses returned home than Elizabeth fell ill of a fever and died. Samuel's eyes did not recover and he never resumed his diary, so we know little of his feelings at this time, or of his life after his wife's death.

A visit to a jeweller's shop

III

FASHIONABLE WOMEN IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

It would seem that Elizabeth Pepys was less happy than Dorothy Osborne, partly no doubt because of differences in their characters and circumstances. Dorothy Osborne, for example, was happier in her choice of a husband than was Elizabeth Pepys, and she had, too, the rare gift of making happiness. Doubtless too the difference

was just a special case of the general difference between women of the Commonwealth and those of the Restoration period.

Women like Dorothy lived quietly in the country, enjoying simple pleasures and either cultivating their minds or finding their chief interest in housewifery. But the love of town life and of town amusements, discouraged by the Puritans, lingered on in holes and corners (the life of Sir John Peyton's country house is a good example of this), and when Charles II came to the throne simpler ways of living were given up.

Well-to-do people—all those who were not tied by the need of earning their living to any particular place—left the country and flocked to London to have a good time. Theatre-going, balls, card-playing, and sports of all kinds were revived. Clothes became elaborate and costly; Samuel Pepys's description of his own and of his wife's clothes is typical of the new state of affairs. The discovery and introduction into England of three new drinks, tea, coffee, and chocolate, provided an excuse for parties at which they were offered. Life became an endless social round.

The new state of affairs lasted well into the middle of the eighteenth century. The way of life of a fashionable woman of the period could hardly be better described than in the following lines from the *Journal of a Modern Lady*, written by Dean Swift in 1728:

> The modern dame is waked by noon,
> Some authors say, not quite so soon,
> Because, though sore against her will,
> She sat all night up at quadrille.
> She stretches, gapes, unglues her eyes
> And asks if it be time to rise.
> Of headache and the spleen complains,
> And then, to cool her heated brains,

(Her nightgown and her slippers brought her)
Takes a large dram of citron water.
Now, loitering o'er her tea and cream
She enters on her usual theme ;
Her last night's ill success repeats ;
Calls Lady Spade a hundred cheats ;
Through every game pursues her tale
Like hunters o'er their evening ale.
Now to another scene give place ;
Enter the folk with silks and lace ;
' Observe this pattern ; there 's a stuff ;
I can have customers enough ;
Dear madam, you are grown so hard ;
This lace is worth twelve pounds a yard ;
Madam, if there be truth in man
I never sold so cheap a fan.'
This business of importance o'er
And madam almost dressed by four,
The footman in his usual phrase
Comes up with, ' Madam, dinner stays '.

* * *

But let me now a while survey
Our madam o'er her evening tea
Surrounded with her noisy clans
Of prudes, coquets and harridans.
They contradict, affirm, dispute,
No single tongue one moment mute,
All mad to speak, and none to hearken
They set the very lapdog barking.

* * *

But see, the female club disbands,
Each twenty visits on her hands.
Now all alone, poor madam sits
In vapours and hysteric fits.
' Here Betty, let me take my drops,
And feel my pulse, I know it stops.'
' Dear madam, try to take a nap—'
But now they hear a footman's rap—
' Go, run and light the ladies up ;
It must be one before we sup.'

The table, cards and counters set,
And all the gamester ladies met,
Her spleen and fits recovered quite,
Our madam can sit up all night.
The time too precious now to waste
And supper gobbled up in haste
Again afresh to cards they run
As if they had but just begun.
At last they hear the watchman knock
'A frosty morning—past four o'clock.'
The chairmen are not to be found—
'Come, let us play the other round.'
Now all in haste they huddle on
Their hoods and cloaks, and get them gone,
But first the winner must invite
The company tomorrow night.

There is an amusing little catechism written in Queen Anne's reign, which shows that Swift (no great lover of fine ladies) was not unfair in his drawing of fashionable life.

'How do you employ your time now?'
'I lie in Bed till Noon, dress all the Afternoon, Dine in the Evening, and play at Cards till Midnight.'
'How do you spend the Sabbath?'
'In Chit Chat.'
'What do you talk of?'
'New Fashions and New Plays.'
'Pray, Madam, what Books do you read?'
'I read lewd Plays and winning Romances.'
'Who is it you love?'
'Myself.'
'What! nobody else?'
'My Page, my Monkey, and my Lap Dog.'

An answer to this attack (The Country-Gentlewoman's Catechism) was at some pains to point out that all English women were not frivolous and debased.

'How was you Educated?' (Asks the Questioner).
A. Under the watchful Care of a Pious indulgent Mother; with the necessary Assistance of a good *English* School.

THE *Country-Gentlewoman's* CATECHISM:

OR,

A True Answer to the *Town-Ladies* Catechism.

LONDON: Printed in the Year, 1703.

Q. What did you learn there ?

A. I learnt Needle-Work, Raising of Past, Painting upon Glass, Mark, Quilts, and such like things as was necessary in the Government of a Family.

Q. How do you spend your time now ?

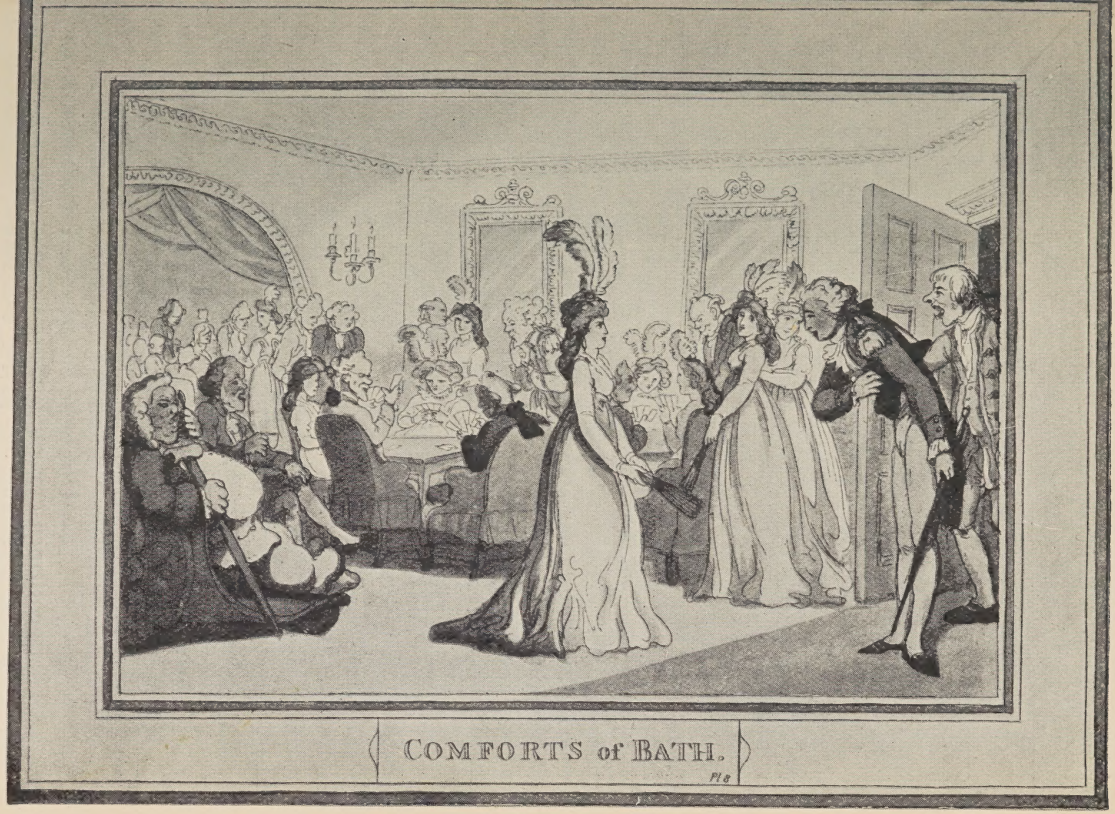
A. I allow a little time for Devotion, and I Dine as the honest custom directs at Noon ; after Dinner I divert myself an Hour in harmless Conversation, and sometimes give myself the liberty of reading a Diverting Book ; in the Evening I pleasure my self in the Garden, or perhaps visit some virtuous Neighbour.

But those who are curious enough to look up *Spectator*, No. 323, will see that Addison in his ' diary of a Lady of Quality ', tells a very different story. Shopping, then, as now, was a favourite diversion of the fine ladies who had time and money to waste. Swift notices the custom of sending things to the customer's house for the lady to choose or refuse at her leisure. If a lady chose to go out shopping herself, the day being fine and she inclined to sight-seeing, she might hear the shop women commend her wares as our butchers do their meat.

Madam, what is 't you want,
Rich Fans of India paint ?
Fine Hoods or Scarfs, my Lady ?
Silk Stockings will you buy,
In Grain or other Dye ?
Pray, Madam, please your Eye ;
I've good as e'er was made ye.

When the fine lady wished to leave town for a change she either took a villa at Twickenham or Richmond or went to one of the fashionable watering-places—Bath, Tunbridge Wells, Clifton, Barnet, or Epsom, to drink the waters, whether she was ill or well. Here she merely lived the life of London over again, with local variations.

Daniel Defoe, who was a very careful observer, visited Bath in 1722, and in his *Tour through the Southern*



The Rooms at Bath, drawn by Rowlandson

Counties of England, wrote the following account of life there :

'It has been observed that anciently this was a resort for cripples and diseased persons principally, but now we may say it is a resort of the sound as well as the sick, and a place that helps the indolent and the gay to commit that worst of murders that is to say the killing of time.

'In the morning the young lady is fetched in a close chair dressed in her bathing clothes, to the bath. There the music plays her into the bath and the women who tend her present her with a little floating wooden dish like a bason, in which the lady puts a handkerchief, a nosegay and of late the snuffbox is added. She then traverses the bath, if a novice, with a guide, if otherwise, by herself, and having amused herself an hour or two, calls for her chair and returns to her lodging.

'In the afternoon there is frequently a play, though the decorations are mean and the performances accordingly. In the evening there is a ball, and dancing at least twice a week. 'Tis also the fashion of the place for the company to go every day pretty constantly to hear divine service at the great church where are prayers twice a day.'

This was written before the days of the great Beau Nash, the famous master of the ceremonies, whose rule was so absolute that he once tore off the Duchess of Queensberry's apron (aprons were then fashionable wear although Nash himself disapproved of them for ladies), and threw it among the waiting maids. Nash's rules of conduct at balls and assemblies are worth quoting.

1. That ladies coming to the ball appoint a time for their footmen coming to wait on them home, to prevent disturbance and inconvenience to themselves and others.

2. That no gentleman give his ticket for the balls to any but gentlewomen. N.B.—Unless he has none of his acquaintance.

3. That gentlemen crowding before ladies at the balls show ill manners ; and that none do so for the future except such as respect nobody but themselves.

Fashionable Dresses in the Rooms at Weymouth

1774.

But what is most ridiculous is the attention paid to dress in these public retirements, where a gentleman or a lady is expected to appear as gay as at court, or at Ranelagh.' Bonnell Thornton

4. That the elder ladies and children be content with a second bench at a ball, as being past or not come to perfection.

5. That the younger ladies take notice how many eyes observe them.

After Bath, Defoe visited Tunbridge Wells, and there he found very much the same state of affairs :

'When I came to the Wells I found a great deal of good company there. The ladies that appear here are indeed the glory of the place ; the coming to the wells to drink the water seems to be little more than a mere matter of custom ; company and diversion is in short the main business of the place. . . .

'After the appearance is over at the Wells, where the ladies are all in an undress, and at the Chapel, the company go home, and as if it was another species of people or a collection from another place you are surprised to see the walks covered with Ladies completely dressed and gay to profusion ; where rich cloaths, jewels, and beauty dazzle the eyes from one end of the range to the other.

'Near the well is a long gallery, paved and covered over, to walk on in the bad weather, and where likewise, the band of music have place. There are also rooms to drink chocolate and coffee, and to play at cards.'

The popularity of these and other fashionable watering-places, such as Weymouth and Brighthelmstone, lasted right to the end of the eighteenth century. In a novel called *Humphry Clinker*, written by Tobias Smollett in 1770, the heroine, Lydia Melford, goes to stay at Bath, and sends to a school friend the following account of her way of life there :

'Bath is to me a new world. All is gaiety, good humour and diversion ; the eye is continually entertained with the splendour of dress and equipage and the ear with the sound of coaches, chaises, chairs and other carriages. The merry bells ring round from morn till night. Then we are welcomed by the city waits in our own lodgings ; we have music in the Pump Room every morning, cotillons every forenoon in the rooms ; balls twice

a week and concerts every other night ; besides private assemblies and parties without number.

'At eight in the morning we go in deshabille to the Pump Room, which is crowded like a Welsh fair ; and there you see the highest quality and the lowest tradesfolks jostling each other, without ceremony hail fellow well met. Right under the Pump Room windows is the King's bath, a huge cistern where you see the patients up to their necks in hot water. The ladies wear jackets and petticoats of brown linen, with chip hats, in which they fix their handkerchiefs to wipe the sweat from their faces ; but truly, whether it is owing to the steam that surrounds them, or the heat of the water, or the nature of the dress, or all these causes together, they look so flushed and so frightful that I always turn my eyes another way.

'The pumper, with his wife and servant, attend within a bar, and the glasses, of different sizes, stand ranged in order before them, so you have nothing to do but to point at that which you choose, and it is filled immediately, hot and sparkling from the pump. You cannot imagine what wonderful cures it performs.

'Hard by the Pump Room is a coffee house for the ladies, but my aunt says young girls are not admitted, in as much as the conversation turns upon politics, scandal, philosophy and other subjects above our capacity ; but we are allowed to accompany them to the booksellers' shops, where we read novels, plays, pamphlets and newspapers for so small a subscription as a crown a quarter. From the bookseller's shop we make a tour through the millener's and toymen ; and commonly stop at Mr. Gill's the pastrycook, to take a jelly, a tart, or a small basin of vermicelli.

'After all, the great scenes of entertainment at Bath are the two public rooms, where the company meet alternately every evening. They are generally crowded with well-dressed people, who drink tea in separate parties, play at cards, walk, or sit and chat together, just as they are disposed. Twice a week there is a ball ; the expense of which is defrayed by a voluntary subscription among the gentlemen, and every subscriber has three tickets.'

A ball in the days of the great Beau Nash was as ceremonious as and much more solemn than a church service. The ball opened with a minuet danced by two

MR. WILSON respectfully informs such Ladies and Gentlemen as wish to acquire a knowledge of Dancing beyond the limits of this work, that his Academy is always open throughout the year. He likewise continues to teach at his Residence, No. 9, *Bedford-street, Bedford-row*, Persons of any age, in the most private manner, in every department of Dancing, adapted either to the Stage or the Ball-room. Ladies and Gentlemen from the Country, and Gentlemen of the Army and Navy, who have never learnt or have not acquired the present fashionable style, may be instructed on a plan to qualify them with the greatest facility to join the most polite Assemblies, (as Mr. W. has always a sufficient number to make up a Country Dance,) and their attendance made convenient to themselves in any of the following and numerous other Dances:—

	L.	S.	D.
Minuet de la Cour.....	5	5	0
Gavotte	3	3	0
Shantruse	4	4	0
Scotch Minuet.....	2	12	6
Country Dancing, two practice nights a week, one guinea and a half per quarter, or four lessons when convenient	1	1	0
or completed for	5	5	0
The Address.....	2	2	0
Allemande	3	3	0
Highland Fling.....	3	3	0
Stage Hornpipe	4	4	0
Irish Comic Dance	3	3	0
Ladies and Gentlemen waited on at their own Residences, two lessons .. .	1	1	0

	L.	S.	D.
Cossack	4	4	0
Broad-sword Hornpipe....	5	5	0
Plain Minuet	3	3	0
Spanish Fandango	5	5	0
Ground Hornpipe	3	13	6
Irish and Scotch Reels with the original Scotch and Irish Steps	4	4	0
Tambarine Hornpipe.....	4	4	0
The Louvre	4	4	0
Rifle Hornpipe	5	5	0
Devonshire Minuet.....	5	5	0
Corsair Hornpipe	4	4	0
Brunswick Waltz.....	4	4	0
Strathspey Minuet	4	4	0

Stage Dancing, Strathspeys, Cotillions, &c.

*** For the sake of privacy, no third person is permitted to be present while the Pupil is receiving a Lesson, except requested by the Person learning.

Children separately taught. Boarding Schools attended.

Such Ladies as wish private instructions, may receive them from Mrs. Wilson, in any of the above departments of Dancing.

The Tambarine, Castanets, and Broad-sword taught.

For further Particulars, apply to Mr. WILSON, at his Residence, No. 9, Bedford-street, Bedford-row, Holborn; where he may be spoken with privately every day from 10 till 11 in the Morning, and from 4 till 6 in the Afternoon.

London: Printed by W. CALVERT, Great Shire-Lane; Lincoln's-Inn.

Engraved for Wilson's Companion to the Ball Room.

people of the highest rank present. Minuets were danced for two hours, and at eight o'clock country dances, Roger de Coverley and the like, began. At nine o'clock came the interval during which tea was served to the ladies. On the stroke of eleven the music stopped, often in the middle of a bar ; chairs and coaches were called for, torches were lit, and the company departed. Not even for the pleading of a princess would Nash allow a single step to be danced after eleven of the clock.

Many people, from time to time during the eighteenth century, deplored the uselessness of the kind of life thus described. In the early years of the century the *Spectator* discussed the problem of 'butterfly women', trying to rouse public opinion in the matter, and hoping to revive the old domestic arts, and particularly needlework, as an occupation for women. Here is one of the *Spectator* letters dealing with this subject :

'Mr. Spectator,

'I have a couple of nieces under my direction, who so often run gadding abroad that I do not know where to have them. Their dress, their tea and their visits take up all their time, and they go to bed as tired with doing nothing as I am after quilting a whole under-petticoat. Those hours which in this age are thrown away in dress, play, visits and the like were employed in my time in writing out receipts or working beds, chairs and hangings for the family. It grieves my heart to see a couple of proud idle flirts sipping their tea, for a whole afternoon, in a room hung round with the industry of their great grandmother.'

And here is Mr. Spectator's comment upon the matter :

'What a delightful entertainment it must be to the fair sex, whom their native modesty, and the tenderness of men towards them exempt from public business, to pass their hours in imitating fruits and flowers, and transplanting all the beauties of nature into their own dress, or raising a new creation in their closet and apartment. This is me thinks the most proper way in which

a lady can show a fine genius. Even if I may, without breach of good manners, imagine that any pretty creature is void of genius, I must nevertheless insist upon her working if it be only to keep her out of harm's way.'

What was the harm which the *Spectator* feared for women as a result of this way of life? It was not so much that they were idle and useless as that their idleness affected for the worse their whole outlook and attitude. Instead of being intelligent, cultivated, and generous they seemed empty-headed, brainless, and selfish.

'I have often [says Mr. Spectator] reflected with myself on this unaccountable humour in womankind, of being smitten with everything that is showy and superficial. . . . Talk of a new married couple and you immediately hear whether they keep a coach and six or eat in plate; mention the name of an absent lady and it is ten to one but you hear something of her gown and petticoat. A ball is a great help to discourse, and a birthday furnishes conversation for a twelvemonth after. In short they consider only the drapery of the species and never cast away a thought on those ornaments of the mind that make persons illustrious in themselves and useful to others.'

The same opinion of women is expressed in Swift's poem, the *Furniture of a Woman's Mind*, published in 1727. Swift, when a young man, lived for some years at Moor Park as William Temple's secretary, and knew Dorothy Osborne well and could compare her with the women who followed her. Here are some of the verses:

A set of phrases learnt by rote;
A passion for a scarlet coat;
When at a play to laugh or cry,
Yet cannot tell the reason why;
Never to hold her tongue a minute;
While all she prates has nothing in't,
Whole hours can with a coxcomb sit
And take his nonsense all for wit;

Can at her morning tea run o'er
The scandal of the day before
Improving hourly in her skill
To cheat and wrangle at Quadrille.
In choosing lace a critic nice ;
Known to a groat the lowest price ;
Can in her females clubs dispute
What lining best the silk will suit,
What colours each complexion match
And where with art to place a patch.
If chance a mouse creeps in her sight
Can finely counterfeit a fright ;
Can dextrously her husband teaze
By taking fits whene'er she please ;
If Molly happens to be careless
And but neglects to warm her hairlace
She gets a cold as sure as death
And vows she scarce can fetch her breath
O yes ! if any man can find
More virtues in a woman's mind
Take notice he has my commission
To add them in the next edition.

Dorothy Osborne had been determined to marry for love or not at all; in Swift's time marriages for money were common enough, and husband-hunting became a trade to which women were trained right from childhood. Here is the *Spectator's* account of a girl's upbringing in 1710 :

'When a girl is safely brought from her nurse, before she is capable of forming one simple notion of anything in life, she is delivered to the hands of her dancing master and with a collar round her neck the pretty wild thing is taught a fantastical gravity of behaviour and forced to a particular way of holding her head, heaving her breast, and moving with her whole body, and all this under pain of never having a husband if she steps or looks awry. To make her an agreeable person is the main purpose of her parents ; to that is all their cost, to that all their care directed, and from this general folly of parents we owe our present numerous race of coquettes.'

A figure of Folly, preceded by a monkey, leading a newly arrived family into Bath. From Anstey's 'New Bath Guide'

Husband-hunting demanded that women should be suitably attired for the chase. Says the *Spectator* :

'The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work, and if they make an excursion into a mercer's or a toyshop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after.'

'Orator Henley' a crazy parson of the time, found the freaks of fashion a popular subject ; he advertises the text of one of his 'orations' so :

'The Monday's orations will be shortly resumed. On Wednesday, the oration will be on the skits of the fashions, or a live gallery of family pictures in all ages, ruffs, muffs, puffs manifold, shoes, wedding-shoes, two-shoes, slip-shoes, peals, clocks, pantoufles, buskins, pantaloons, garters, shoulder-knots, perriwigs, head-dresses, modistries, tuckers, farthingales, corkins, minikins, slammakins, ruffles, round robins, toilets, fans, patches ; being a general view of the *beau monde* before Noah's flood to the year 29.'

The *Spectator* sought to ridicule women out of this kind of thing. Hence a series of mock-serious essays on 'the right adjustment of the hair'. In the course of these he says :

'There is not so variable a thing in nature as a lady's headdress; within my own memory I have known it rise and fall above thirty degrees. About ten years ago it shot up to a very great height, inasmuch that the female part of our species were much taller than the men. The women were of such an enormous stature that we appeared as grasshoppers before them ; at present the whole sex is in a manner dwarfed and shrunk into a race of beauties that seems almost another species. I remember several ladies who were once very near seven foot high, that at present want some inches of five.'

The head-dress continued to rise and fall throughout the century ; it varied in shape as well as in size. 'The

women [writes a student of eighteenth-century dress] wore hoods, small caps, enormous hats, tiny milkmaid's straw hats ; hair in curls and flat to the head ; " pompons " or huge structures two or three feet high, with all kinds of decorations—ribbons, birds' nests, ships, carriages and waggons in gold and silver lace—in the erection.' Feather head-dresses came into fashion towards the end of the century. They rose, nodding and swaying to a great height. Henry Rogers, the poet, says that he once rode to Ranelagh with a lady who was forced to sit on a stool on the floor of the coach in order to accommodate her towering feathers. Women of taste seem to have preferred the hood, and that it could be very attractive we know from Addison's description.

' As I was standing in the hinder part of the box (at the opera) I took notice of a little cluster of women sitting together in the prettiest coloured hoods that I ever saw. One of them was blue, another yellow and another philemot ; the fourth was of a pink colour and the fifth of a pale green. I looked with as much pleasure upon this little parti-coloured assembly as upon a bed of tulips.'

But the *Spectator's* ridicule had very little result, for much the same sort of fashions were in vogue when *Humphry Clinker* was published. Lydia Melford went to stay for a short time in London, and while there gave her school friend an amusing account of her experiences with the hairdresser. After describing the parties and places of entertainment which she has attended she says :

' Besides Ranelagh and Vauxhall, I have been at Mrs. Cornely's assembly, which for the rooms, the company, the dresses and decorations, surpasses all description ; but as I have no great turn for card playing I have not yet entered thoroughly into the spirit of the place ; indeed I am still such a country hoyden that I could hardly find patience to be put in a condition to appear ; yet I was not above six hours under the hands of the hairdresser, who stuffed

Men's Fashions about 1760. From the 'Recueil de Planches', Paris, 1762–7

[*'You may, Sir, please to remember, that not long since you attacked our hoods. We must, therefore, beg leave to represent to you, that the men in all ages, have been little less whimsical in adorning, than ourselves.' Extract from 'Dorinda's' letter to Mr. Spectator. 'Spectator', No. 319, March 6th, 1716*

Women's Fashions about 1760. From the 'Recueil de Planches', Paris, 1762–7

'The Silk Worms who ramble twice or thrice a week from shop to shop, to turn over all the goods in town.' Addison, Spectator', No. 454

my head with as much black wool as would have made a quilted petticoat ; and after all it was the smallest head in the assembly except my aunt's.'

Anstey, who wrote the *New Bath Guide*, has a very amusing poem on 'The Friseur' which it is impossible not to quote from here.

THE FRISEUR

The fair Jesebella what art can adorn,
Whose cheeks are like roses, that blush in the morn ?
As bright were her locks as in heaven are seen
Presented for stars by th' Egyptian queen ;
But alas ! the sweet nymph they no longer must deck,
No more shall they flow o'er ivory neck ;
Those tresses, which Venus might take as a favour,
Fall a victim at once to an outlandish [1] shaver ;
Her head has he robb'd with as little remorse,
As a foxhunter Crops both his dogs and his horse :
A wretch, that, so far from repenting his theft,
Makes a boast of tormenting the little that 's left :
And first at her porcupine head he begins
To fumble and poke with his irons and pins,
Discharging a steam that the devil would choke,
From paper, pomatum, from powder and smoke.
The patient submits, and with due resignation,
Prepares for her fate in the next operation.
Is it Taurus's tail, or the *tête de mouton*,
Or the beard of the goat that he dares to put on ?
'Tis a wig en vergette, that from Paris was brought
Une tête comme il faut, that the varlet has bought,
Of a beggar, whose head he has shav'd for a groat ;
Now fix'd to her head, does he frizzle and dab it ;
'Tis a foretop no more.—'Tis the skin of a rabbit—
'Tis a muff—'tis a thing that by all is confess'd
Is in colour and shape like a chaffinch's nest.

[1] 'Outlandish' because fashionable hairdressers at this time were usuall Frenchmen.

Satire on the Fashions of 1776

From a print in the British Museum

The drawing on p. 125, taken from the *Ladies' Magazine* for June 1775, shows very clearly the extraordinary convolutions of the fashionable head of hair. The plate was accompanied by 'A description of the Newest Dress worn by the LADIES', some little of which may be quoted.

'The *head-dress* was ushered in at the beginning of the spring with a *Small* tuft of *feathers* which was Soon changed to two or three *distinct* ones of the largest size placed remarkably flat with a rose of ribbons on the fore part, and a knot Suspending at the back of the head.

'The hair low before, yet rising on the forehead nearly perpendicular, in a round small toupee. The sides down to the ears combed smooth, very far back and broad behind. The corners raised but a little above the front, with two, three, or four large curls down the sides, the bottom curl in many nearly upright. The bag not so low as the chin, small, and smooth at bottom, in general. The robings strait, in many puckered. Stays quite low before, and the bosom much exposed. Breast-knot small; bouquet large. The round cuff, variously trimmed, in some up the arms, was indiscriminately worn on sacques, or the loose gown, which was thrown carelessly behind, and gathered up on the sides, or close to the back of the waist; in either tied up with ribbons of a different colour.

'Hats little worn; white roses were generally worn in the shoes or slippers.'

The following advertisements show how the eighteenth-century shopkeeper profited at the expense of the fine ladies, and how artfully (as the poet Crabbe remarked) the 'gay Perfumer comes, And advertises Beauty, Grace, and Love'.

Crabbe singled out for scorn the identical 'Circassian Bloom' advertised below:

> Come, faded Belles, who would your Youth renew,
> And learn the Wonders of Olympian Dew;
> Restore the Roses that begin to faint,
> Nor think celestial Washes, vulgar Paint:
> Your former Features, Airs, and Arts assume,
> Circassian Virtues, with Circassian Bloom.

Publick Notice is hereby given,

[*For the Information of all* GENTLEMEN *and* LADIES]

THAT *Charles Lyon, Grecian,* Maker of the JERUSALEM WASHBALLS, otherwise called GRECIAN WASHBALLS, so universally esteem'd by all the Quality,

N B. At the following Places is sold an incomparable Tooth-Powder, which makes the Teeth as white as Ivory, and preserves them from Rotting or Decaying. It effectually cures the Scurvy in the Gums Price one Shilling each Box.

Also a delicate Lip-Salve, that cures any rough and chopp'd Lips, and makes them of a fine lively red, Price one Shilling each Pot, viz. Cocoa-Tree Chocolate-House, Pall-Mall; Will's Coffee-House, Scotland-Yard, Charing-Cross; Guildhall Coffee-House, by Guildhall; Sword-Blade Coffee-House, Birchin-Lane; and the East-India Coffee-House, Leadenhall-Street

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BLOOM of CIRCASSIA.

IT is allowed that the *Circassians* are the most beautiful women in the world. However they derive not all their charms from nature. A gentleman long resident there in *suit* of a person of distinction, well known for his travels through *Greece*, became acquainted with the *Liquid Bloom*, extracted from a *Vegetable*, the produce of that country, in general used there with the most esteemed beauties. It differs from all others in two very essential points: first, that it instantly gives a rose hue to the cheek, not to be distinguished from the lively and animated bloom of rural beauty; nor will it come off by perspiration, or the use of an handkerchief.—A moment's trial will prove that it is not to be paralleled. (Price 6s. and 3s. 6d. the bottle.)

Directions *for the use of the* Liquid Bloom.

Take a piece of cotton, into which drop a little of the *Liquid Bloom*, and rub it upon the cheeks, disposing it according to nature, to the best of your judgment.—You may heighten or lower the bloom at pleasure, so as to make it appear exactly to your wish. It is perfectly innocent, but it will be proper, nevertheless, to wash it off with the BLOSSOM MILK of *Circassia*, or a wash-ball and water, at least every night and morning, otherwise it will not appear so fresh and beautiful, from the unavoidable allay of dust and smoke.

Artificial aids to beauty in the Eighteenth Century. Advertisements of soap or 'washballs' (from 'The Grub-street Journal' of 25 Nov. 1731), face-cream, &c.

Fashionable Head-dresses 1780 and 1781

'I have had my hair cut and pippered, and singed, and bolstered, and buckled in the newest fashion by a French freezer.' Winifred Jenkins to Mrs. Mary Jones at Brambleton Hall

Two Ladies in the newest Dreſs.

From Dranings taken at Ranelagh. May 1775.

Published by G. Robinson June 1. 1775.

Critics of these extravagant fashions sometimes asserted that the fashionable boarding school was partly to blame. It was usual at these schools to arrange balls for the pupils, which served the double purpose of advertising the school and gratifying the young misses (and masters) who attended them. If one can judge from the following description (written in 1785) the school-girl of that day was at least as proficient in apeing her fashionable elder sister, as she was at 'reading, writing, and accompts'.

'The time of our annual school-ball was now arrived. The young gentlemen at the academy were always permitted to be there; and Hillario wrote to beg me to dance with him, which I promised. I believe few people ever suffered more from expectation than myself, the two days preceeding the ball. We had all new cloaths on the occasion,—*mine* were very elegant. At length the happy day arrived, and we were all called over by the governess in the large room, before we proceeded to the ball-room. I caught a look at myself as I passed the glass, and was perfectly satisfied with my appearance. When we entered the ball-room my heart danced with rapture. I had never been in public before,—the lights, the music, the crowd of well-dressed people,—all conspired to charm me,—I seemed to tread on air. The minuets began, (it is well-known that at a school-ball, the young ladies dance before the other part of the company begin); my turn was to dance the fifth; the young lady I was to dance with, was very pretty, and it had often been a matter of dispute in the school, which was the handsomest. But, from the moment we began, every whisper was in favour of the lady in straw-colour, and from that moment my superiority over Miss C—— was determined.

'When country-dances for the company began, Hillario flew to me,—he was in rapture at my appearance. He had never before seen me dance. . . . He paid me a thousand compliments; I was pleased with myself, and in such high spirits, that Hillario said he was the happiest man living, and begged to be indulged with my hand the ensuing evening. I agreed to oblige him, for which he returned me a thousand thanks.'

Then there was the 'Birth-night Ball', planned, as

likely as not, by the astute mother as part of a matrimonial campaign, and described for us amusingly enough by one 'Anne Louisa P——' in the *Ladies' Magazine* for November 1786.

THE BIRTH-NIGHT BALL

My dear, I last night, when you call'd, was in haste
To proceed to a ball in the height of the taste ;
'Twas Emily's birthnight, and I was invited,
I promise you too I was highly delighted,
At seven I set out in my silks and my laces ;
For I thought all the bells would be dressed in their graces,
To — — I drove, and was met at the door,
By some sweet powder'd beaux, at least half a score.
Soon as dancing began I was blest with the hand
Of that smartest of beaux, I mean Henry D——,
The next delicate fop that my eyes saw advance,
Was Jemmy ——, just returned from France,
So unpolish'd, and rough, and conceited I vow
That his manners and gait would have frighten'd a cow,
And with him sweet Maria, a pity I swear,
That a maid so deserving should dance with a bear.
Then follow'd Miss J——, a smart little coquette,
With her sparkling blue eyes, and her hair *la brunette* ;
And her partner, compos'd of buffoon and grimace,
I thought them the comical'st pair in the place.
Then Charlotte came, mounted on her red high heel'd shoes,
What scorn, and what folly this damsel doth use.
Affection has really her senses bereft
And scarcely she moves either right hand or left ;
Which made Lucy F—— near me quite vext,
And say, as she danced down, 'Pray, Miss, what comes next ?'
Her partner I pitied, a clever smart youth
As e'er I beheld, he danc'd well, that 's the truth.
Young Mr. L—— was with Emily blest,
Indeed, my dear Harriot, this couple danc'd best.
Next stept in, as nimble as you must suppose,
The spruce Georgey——, with his pigeon-turn'd toes,

He always looks downward, and Betsey F—— said,
'Lord ! lord ! my good Sir, pr'ythee hold up your head.'
Sally G—— had a partner as dark as G——,
Old D—— shook his heels with the charming Sophia ;
Little Jane had a partner at least six feet high,
And short N—— minced his steps with tall Lydia B——,
Charles G—— and Eliza, Jack S—— and Miss Lee,
And fair Julia Johnson, were charming to see ;
Edward and Susan, all danc'd with such grace,
That most present allow'd them the best in the place.
But those I lik'd best, and the couple most pretty,
Was smart Billy B—— and little Miss Kitty.
They tript it so graceful, and mov'd with such ease,
That Billy and Kitty all people did please.
I was greatly amus'd, and at twelve of the night,
I returned to my home, with intention to write ;
But fatigu'd, and bedizz-n, I threw pen away,
For that time, and waited 'till dawn of this day.
When I rose to relate this diversion to you,
If you've patience to read it—my Harriot adieu.

ANNE LOUISA P——.

'Tis easy enough to understand why such delights as these were eagerly looked forward to, and back upon, especially by country dwellers. The well-to-do woman in the eighteenth century often lacked sufficient occupation ; she had not enough work to keep her healthy either in body or in mind. It is true that the more energetic could always find enough to do in superintending her own (and perhaps her neighbour's) family affairs, as did Lady Bustle, Lady Bountiful, and Mrs. Busy, spoken of in Chapter VI. But women of leisure were often ill because they were often idle ; they suffered from the 'vapours', as Dorothy Osborne's 'spleen' was now called.

And indeed one can almost understand the popularity of the 'spleen' when the sufferer could make choice of

such interesting remedies as the 'Cordial Balm of Gilead', or the 'carriage exercise' invariably recommended by fashionable doctors. In bad weather even healthy women kept closely to their houses, unless, of course,

> The CELEBRATED CORDIAL BALM of GILEAD is happily calculated, for the Weak, the Sickly, and Infirm. In all inward Decays, Debility, Lowness of Spirits, Weaknesses in either Sex, it affords the most wonderful relief.
>
> Prepared by Dr. SOLOMON,
> Author of "THE GUIDE TO HEALTH," and other valuable Works, at his house, Solomon's Place, Brownlow-street (late Maryborne), Liverpool.
>
> Price HALF-A-GUINEA a Bottle.
>
> "Is there no Balm in Gilead? Is there no Physician there? Why then is not the health of the Daughter of my People recovered?"—Jer. viii. 22.
>
> "The Lord hath caused medicines to grow out of the earth, and he that is wise will not abhor them; for with such doth he heal men and take away their pains."——Eccl. xxxviii. 4. 7.
>
> The CORDIAL BALM of GILEAD is a most noble medicine, composed of some of the choicest natural balsams and strengtheners in the whole Materia Medica. The process is long and laborious, and requires the most nice and minute attention. Not a single drop can be produced under nine weeks digestion; and the elements from which it is composed are obtained with still greater labour and difficulty. The discovery of it has cost the Proprietor amazing sums, great loss of time, repeated experiments, and close application to practical chemistry; and it affords him no small gratification to avow, that in offering it to the Public, he invades no man's property, nor imitates any medicine at present known in public or private practice. The experiments he has made with it, upon a variety of diseases, would almost exceed belief.

Advertisement of about 1800

the necessity of earning a living forced them to go abroad.

From November to March, fine ladies were laid up, so to speak, for the winter, almost as thoroughly as bicycles used to be laid up. It will perhaps be remembered how Jane Austen's charming heroine, Elizabeth Bennet,

astonished and indeed almost scandalized her friends by her spirited walking in the mud.

And the lady's mind enjoyed about as much rational entertainments as her body did exercise. For those who, like Fanny Burney, did not care for loo, or piquet, or cassino, or quadrille, or vingt-un, or brag, or speculation, or commerce, or ombre, or faro, there were 'Acrostics' (word puzzles), as they are to be seen in the old pages of the *Ladies' Magazine*. Here is an Acrostic—which young and old heads puzzled over during the long evenings in November 1786.

'An Enigmatical List of YOUNG LADIES at Bicester. Oxfordshire.'

(1) One-fourth of the reverse to cruel, and three-fourths of an ornament for the finger.
(2) A man's christian name.
(3) What you are now doing.
(4) Two-thirds of what was to-morrow, and a fashionable carriage.
(5) Three-sevenths of ill-will, and half of a famous university.
(6) An appellation for the evil demon, changing the first letter.
(7) An English coin, and a passage through a river.

A little more rational amusement (but a very little) was supplied by the local 'Circulating Library'[1]. 'I will read you their names directly; here they are in my pocket-book', says Isabella Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey*, to her bosom friend, Catherine Morland. One can almost guess the 'amazing horrid' nature of the reading entertainment from the titles alone: *Castle of Wolfenbach*, *Clermont*, *Mysterious Warnings*, *Necromancer of the Black Forest*, *Midnight Bell*, *Orphan of the Rhine*, and *Horrid Mysteries*. Few women wished for any more sensible reading. Only very extraordinary creatures—like Mary Bennet in fiction and Fanny Burney in the flesh—aspired to 'read great books and make extracts', and fatigued their more frivolous friends by handing round 'new extracts to admire'.

[1] See illustration on p. 185.

The critics of women's fads and fashions continued to rage together. We have space only for an amusing little essay on the 'French manner of Frizzlation', (see p. 133) and for some equally amusing 'Advice to the Ladies'.

It is doubtful if the critics had anything to do with it, but certainly towards the end of the eighteenth century fashionable women began to dress themselves in a manner more befitting (and fitting) the human form.

> the long female waist
> Yields to the Grecian more voluptuous taste;
> While circling braids the copious tresses bind,
> And the bare neck spreads beautiful behind.

This was written in 1796, and it marks unmistakably the two most striking changes of fashion between the Ranelagh dress pictured on p. 125 and the style illustrated on p. 135; the waist began to rise and the hair to fall.

The change to a greater simplicity in dress was helped forward by the French Revolution, when Frenchwomen began to model their clothes on the antique simplicity of ancient Greek costume. Possibly the influence and good taste of our own portrait painters, Reynolds and Gainsborough especially, did something to persuade their countrywomen to favour a more natural 'line' in dress. Nor did the English lady follow the Parisian practice of wearing damp dresses in order that the figure might be the more clearly revealed. She did imitate, and that very thoroughly, the French high waist, so that critics of the time (men of course) complained that their wives and sisters were all shoulders and skirt. The complaint was not perhaps so unreasonable as most masculine criticisms of the sort.

ADVICE TO THE LADIES.

IF you have blue eyes—languiſh.
If black eyes—leer.
If you have a pretty foot—wear ſhort Petticoats.
If you are in the leaſt doubtful as to that point—let them be rather long.
If you have good teeth—laugh now and then.
If they are bad—you muſt only ſimper.
While you are young—ſit with your face to the light.
When you are a little advanced—ſit with your back to the window.
If you have a good hand and well turned arm—play on the Piano Forte or make purſes.
If they are clumſy—wear gloves.
If you have a bad voice—always ſpeak in a low tone.
If you have the moſt mellifluous voice in the world—never ſpeak in a high tone.
If you dance well—dance but ſeldom.
If you dance ill—never dance at all.
If you ſing well—make no previous excuſes.
If you ſing indifferently—hesitate not a moment when you are aſked; for few people are judges of ſinging, but every one is ſenſible of a deſire to pleaſe.
If in converſation you think a perſon wrong—rather hint a difference of opinion, than offer a contradiction.
If you find a perſon telling an abſolute falſehood, even let it paſs over in ſilence—it is not worth your while to make any one your enemy by proving him a liar.
Never touch the ſore place in any one's character, for be aſſured, whoever you are, you have ſome foibles of your own; and woman is a flower that may be blaſted in a moment.
It is always in your power to make a friend by ſmiles—but a folly to make an enemy by frowns.
When you have an opportunity to praiſe—do it with all your heart.
When you are forced to blame—appear, at leaſt, to do it with reluctance.
If you are envious of another woman—never ſhew it but by allowing her every good quality and perfection, except thoſe ſhe really poſſeſſes.
If you wiſh to let all the world know you are in love with a particular man—treat him with formality; and every one elſe with eaſe and freedom.
Make it a rule to pleaſe all—and never appear inſenſible to any, deſirous of pleaſing or obeying you, however awkardly it may be executed.
If you are diſpoſed to be pettiſh or inſolent—it is better to exerciſe your ill humour on your dogs or your Ayah, than your friends.
If you would preſerve beauty—riſe early.
If you would preſerve eſteem—be gentle.
If you would obtain power—be condeſcending.
If you would live happy—endeavour to promote the happineſs of others.
Avoid all altercations reſpecting rank or family.

A cutting from 'The London Magazine'

It is entirely owing to the French manner of Frizzlation. Perhaps you have no idea how this is performed. I'll tell you, Sir.——Monſieur, having, with an inimitable air of gentility, depoſited his utenſils on the table, and familiarly enquired after her ladyſhip's health, begins his operation thus: He dextrouſly ſeparates from the reſt, ſix hairs near the crown of the head, twiſts them between his thumb and finger, rolls them up from the points to the root, and, before you can ſay Jack Robinſon, locks them faſt in a ſquare inch of paper. He then takes the next ſix hairs towards the front, papering them up in the ſame manner, and thus he proceeds in a ſtrait line from the crown of the head towards the noſe, till he completes a file (to ſpeak in the military phraſe) of ten papers. He then gradually deſcends towards the right ear, which exactly completes a rank of 30 papers.

Thus, ſuppoſing both ears to be equidiſtant from the crown, we have 60 papers in front, which being multiplied by the depth makes the whole 600. Theſe are ſeparately burnt with hot irons. In this ſituation her ladyſhip looks exactly like a ſun-flower. The papers being now taken off, he daubs her head with at leaſt half a pound of greaſe, to which he adds one pound of meal. Theſe hot irons anſwer a double purpoſe; they not only criſp the hair, but, by their heat, increaſe the natural perſpiration of the head, and thus the pudding is ſupplied with the neceſſary ſalt: I ſay neceſſary; for without this ſalt, the pudding would infallibly ſtink in twenty-four hours. He now begins with all his dexterity to work her ladyſhip's pate into ſuch a ſtate of confuſion, that you would imagine it was intended for the ſtuffing of a chair bottom; then bending it over his finger with one thouſand black pins, he nails the hair ſo faſt to her head, that neither the weather nor time have power to alter its poſition. Thus my lady is dreſt for three months at leaſt: During which time it is not in her power to comb her head. What is the conſequence? Sorry I am to uſe ſo filthy an expreſſion! But really her ladyſhip ſtinketh. Fie, ladies fie! If you ever mean to get huſbands, or to keep them when you have them, reſtore this naſty faſhion with the reſt of your conqueſts. If you knew the power of a tainted breeze over the manhood of the ſtouteſt of us, you would be more careful of offending our noſes, than any of our other ſenſes. I am,

Sir, your's,

[*St. James's Chron.*] TRUEPENNY.

A cutting from 'The London Magazine' of the eighties

The disappearance of the monstrous heads of hair—most of it artificial—made it possible to wear close-fitting bonnets. The bonnet could be very becoming, and while it remained small, it was charming.

But when the bonnet grew into a coal-scuttle, like those pictured on p. 137, its charm was lost.

The feather head-dress still towered in pride of place. The feathers were carried to and from the ball in the sword-case at the back of the carriage ; a lady who could manage her plume dexterously was able (so the joke ran) to tickle her acquaintances on the opposite side of the ball whenever she chose.

Colours for dresses were many and various ; they were usually called by French names, because fashionable dressmakers, then as now, imported scraps of the French language to describe their imitations of French models. In Jane Austen's day (died 1817) ' coquelicot ' or poppy colour was the fashionable shade ; Jane writes to her sister Cassandra that she intends to replace the black military feather in her cap by a coquelicot one, because ' coquelicot is to be all the fashion this winter '. The cap was a sort of undress bonnet. It was worn both indoors and outdoors, and by women of all ages from the maiden to the grandmother. Jane frequently describes her caps, and almost as unforgettably as she does her characters.

' Miss Hare had some pretty caps and is to make me one like one of them, only white satin instead of blue. It will be satin and lace and a little white flower perking out of the left ear like Harriot Bryon's feather ; I have allowed her to go as far as one pound sixteen.'

And again in a later letter:

' My cap has come home and I like it very much. Fanny has one also, hers is white sarsnet and laces of a different shape from mine, more fit for morning carriage wear, which is what it is

DANCING.

MR. DUVAL respectfully informs his Friends and the Public, that he has opened his Quarterly Academy, for young Ladies and Gentlemen, at No. 1, Berry-street, opposite Bold-place.

Mr. D. teaches the QUADRILLES in the most fashionable stile of grace and elegance, as they are now danced in London, Bath, Paris, &c.

The most strict attention is paid to the Improvement of his pupils.

Days and hours of attendance, THURSDAYS and SATURDAYS, from Two till Four o'clock, on the usual terms; and on the same evenings, from six till nine, for private lessons in Dancing or Fencing.

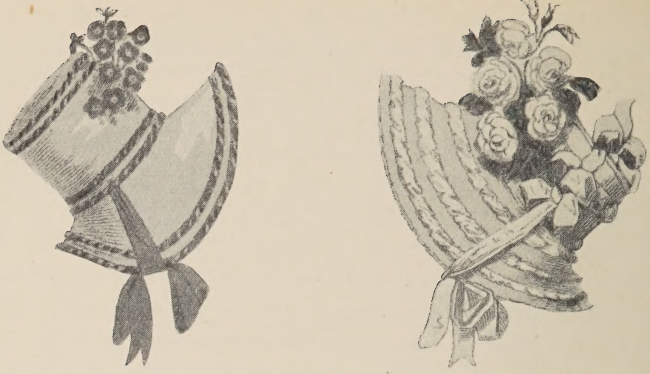
N. B. Young Gentlemen who have not acquired a proper method of Dancing, he will engage to perfect, fit for the first Assemblies, in Six Lessons. Such Families or Schools, either in town or country, as may honour him with their commands, at his residence, No. 5, Gloucester-street, or at his Academy, shall be punctually attended to.

The Dancing Master's Advertisement

'Liverpool Mercury,' Feb. 7, 1817

The coming of the Quadrilles

Cartoon of 1817



'Parisian Head-Dresses'

From Ackermann's 'Repository of Arts', Jan. 1817

Muslin Patterns

From Ackermann's 'Repository of Arts', Aug. 1816

The Day of the Dandy

Caricatures of 1819

intended for, and is in shape exceedingly like our own satin and lace of last winter, shaped round the face exactly like it, with pipes and more fullness and a round crown inserted behind. My cap has a peak in front. Large full bows of very narrow ribbon (old twopenny) are the thing. One over the right temple perhaps, and another at the right ear.'

Often the cap was cut away in front so as to display the front hair, which was dressed in light loose curls on the forehead. 'The ends' (I quote from a description of the cap worn by a princess in 1816) 'which fasten under the chin, are very narrow, as is also the lace border, which is set on plain, except on the forehead where it is very full.'

Muslin was worn in winter as well as summer.

The hardihood of the fine lady, when fashion demanded it, amused the critics almost as much as her lack of pockets. 'Every fashionable fair', say *The Times* of the 9th November 1799, 'has the pleasure of laying everything that belongs to her upon the table wherever she goes.'

The muff was as necessary a part of the outdoor dress as was the fan of the ball-room costume. At the beginning of the eighteenth century it was so small as hardly to admit the hands; at the end of the century it could and very often did provide a nest large enough for a lap dog. Women still pampered pets as in the far-off days of Chaucer's Madame Eglentine. But instead of the chattering monkeys complained of by critics in Queen Anne's time, parrots now croaked in my lady's boudoir, and large spotted dogs, known as 'plum-pudding' dogs, panted after her carriage when she took the morning air.

IV

SERVANTS OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

More than enough has been said of these fashionable follies of women ; and it will of course be remembered that perverse fashions are by no means peculiar to the eighteenth or, indeed, to any other century.

The follies of fashionable women must not obscure from our view the life lived by women below stairs, and when we think of Elizabeth Pepys in her finery, let us think also of her serving maid, Jane Waynham. Jane probably led a happier life than did many domestic servants at that time, because, though in name she was only a servant, yet circumstances made her more truly a companion to her mistress. Yet Jane's lot was not altogether enviable. In common with most servants of the time she was regarded less as a human being with a soul of her own than as part of her master and mistress's property—in much the same way as the tables and chairs

were part of their property. For some years, for example, Jane seems to have slept in her master and mistress's bedroom—on a low truckle bed which could be pushed under their high one in the day time and drawn out at night. And she was expected to perform duties which nowadays would be considered degrading for maid-servants. Pepys would ask Jane and the other servants to shave him, comb his hair, wash his feet, and sit by his bedside mending his clothes.

So absolute was the right of masters and mistresses over their servants at this time, that they were punished and ill-treated at discretion. The maid might run away, but, if she did not, no one else would interfere. There are some extracts from Pepys's diary which show this :

'This morning, observing some things to be laid up not as they should be by the girl, I took a broom and basted her till she cried extremely, which made me vexed, but before I went out I left her appeased.'

'Home, where I found the house full of the washing, and my wife, mighty angry about Will [Pepys's brother] being here to day talking with her maids, which she overheard, idling of their time—at which I was angry, and after directing her to beat at least the little girl, I went to the office and there reproved Will.'

'At supper hearing by accident of my maids their letting in a rogueing Scotchwoman that haunts the office to help them to wash and scour our own house, and that very lately, I fell mightily out, and made my wife, to the disturbance of our house and neighbours, to beat our little girl, and then we shut her down into the cellar, and there she lay all night. So we to bed.'

The treatment meted out to serving-boys was even worse. For some years Jane's small brother served Pepys as his boy, but whenever Jane protested against the harsh treatment given him, she was threatened with dismissal. In the end the boy ran away, as did several of the boys whom Pepys engaged later on. The news-

papers often printed advertisements for runaway servants, which ran like this :

'A Negro Maid went away from her Master's House, a Negro Maid, aged about 16 Years, much pitted with the Small Pox, speaks English well, having a piece of her left Ear bit off by a Dog; she hath on a strip'd Stuff Wastcoat and Petticoat.'

How came this state of affairs to be possible ? Largely because servants were usually either orphans or children whose parents had deserted them—children brought up in the workhouse, whom the Poor Law Authorities were only too glad to hand over to any master or mistress who would take them. Such children had no rights. There was no one to care whether they lived or died. They had nothing in the world to call their own, and were glad enough to be sure of lodging, clothes, and food.

Here is the story of one such child as told by Pepys in his diary. He is looking out for a new serving maid and writes :

'*Aug.* 20. At noon dined at home, and there found a little girl, which she told my wife her name was Jinny, by which name we shall call her. I think a good likely girl and a parish child of St. Brides, of honest parentage and recommended by the church-warden.'

Elizabeth, on receiving her, washed her, cut her hair, took off her ragged and verminous clothes and gave her clean and new ones. That same evening the girl ran away. The next day Pepys went to his brother, who had been responsible for sending him the girl, told him what had happened, and 'directed him to get my clothes again and the girl whipped'. And in the evening he writes :

'At home I find my girl that run away brought by a beadle of St. Bride's parish, and stripped her, and sent her away.'

But it was not entirely to a maid's disadvantage to be treated as her master's property. She was sometimes reckoned among his cherished possessions, and cared for accordingly. Both Elizabeth and Samuel, for example, were very fond of their second maid, Jane (not Jane Waynham), and when she got married in March 1669, Elizabeth gave a wedding feast for Jane and her husband, allowing them to sleep in 'our blue chamber' on the wedding night. On the same occasion Elizabeth gave £20 to Jane, and Samuel £40 to her husband 'towards their setting out in the world', and when we remember how fond Pepys was of money, this must be reckoned a great gift. Later on we find Elizabeth 'all day at Jane's, helping her to cut out linen and other things suitable to her condition'.

Jane Waynham earned £3 a year and whatever clothes her mistress chose to give her. When she had gone and there came 'a new cookmaid, at £4 per annum' Pepys writes in his diary 'the first time I ever did give so much, but we hope it will be nothing lost by keeping a good cook'. Still later 'a very tall maid' who applied for the post of cook asked £5, 'but my wife offered her but £3 10*s.* 0*d.* Whether she will take it or not I know not till to-morrow, but I am afeard she will be over high for us'. Wages did not advance much through the century, but that they were still thought 'over high' the following will show.

'Wages are very considerable . . . a fat Welsh girl who has just come out of the country, scarce understood a word of English, capable of nothing but washing, scouring and sweeping the rooms . . . [received] six guineas a year, besides a guinea for her tea, which all servant maids either take in money, or have it found for them twice a day.'

That maids at this time worked hard has already been

MAry Pound a Girl about Eleven years old, little for her age, with ſmall black Eyes; a round pale Face, with full red Lips, dark brown Hair, cut ſhort, tied behind with a black Ribbon, Gold knob'd Ear Rings in her Ears, a little Burial Gold Ring with a little Ring over it on her middle finger, a black and white ſtriped Bengal night Gown unlined, a black Crape under Petticoat, white thread Stockings, and black Cloath Shooes, went from her Mother Mrs. Pounds Houſe in High Holborn againſt Southampton-Street on Saturday laſt being the 4th of July about eight a Clock in the Morning, whoſoever ſhall bring notice of her, to the ſaid Mrs. Pounds Houſe where ſhe is, ſo as ſhe may be gotten or ſpoken with, ſhall have Ten Guinea's for their pains.

The dress of the middle classes. Above, an advertisement from the 'London Gazette' of July 2–6, 1685; below, an engraving of the wife of a London craftsman by Hollar, 1649

shown. Constantly Jane on Monday mornings got up to wash at two o'clock, and sometimes earlier.

Generally speaking, a good servant was at this time sure of her post. Domestic service has, in fact, usually been freer from unemployment than most other trades and professions. But a sad exception to this rule occurred during the great plague which visited London in 1665. Most wealthy employers left London in panic for the country, dismissing most of their servants, and if any of the remainder fell ill of the plague their masters were much more anxious to get rid of them than to care for them. Here is a passage from Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*, showing the miserable state into which many servants fell at this time. Defoe has been talking about the great influence exerted by fortune-tellers during the plague. He goes on :

'Maidservants especially and menservants were the chief of their customers and after the first demand of "will there be a plague?" the next question was "Oh sir! will my mistress keep me, or will she turn me off? Will she stay here or will she go into the country and if she goes into the country will she take me with her or leave me here to be starved and undone". And the like of menservants.

'The truth is the case of poor servants was very dismal, for it was apparent a prodigious number of them would be turned away and it was so, and of them abundance perished, and particularly of those that false prophets had flattered with hopes that they should be carried with their masters and mistresses into the country, and had not public charity provided for these poor creatures they would have been in the worse condition of any people in the city.'

It is no wonder then that after the Plague, when wealthy people came back to London and set up their houses again, they found that servants had become more dishonest, lazier, less reliable, and less faithful than before. Things went from bad to worse until the year

1725, when Defoe wrote his pamphlet, *Everybody's Business Nobody's Business*, as a protest against the kind of servant of which London at this time was full. Here is an extract from it. It shows that the love of money and fine clothes, which we have noticed in the fashionable women of the time, was spreading to all ranks of life :

'Women servants are now so scarce that from 30*s.* and 40*s.* a year their wages are of late increased to six, seven, nay £8 per annum and upwards ; insomuch that an ordinary tradesman cannot well keep one ; but his wife, who might be useful in his shop or business, must do this drudgery of household affairs, and all this because our servant wenches are so puffed up with pride nowadays that they never think they go fine enough : it is a hard matter to know the mistress from the maid by their dress ; nay very often the maid shall be much the finer of the two. Her neat's leathern shoes are now transformed into laced ones with high heels ; her yarn stockings are turned into fine woollen ones with silk clocks and her high wooden pattens are kicked away for leathern clogs ; she must have a hoop too as well as her mistress and her poor scanty linsey woolsey petticoat is changed into a good silk one, four or five yards wide at the least. In short, plain country Joan is now turned into a fine London madam, can drink tea, take snuff, and carry herself as high as the best.

'Our sessions' papers of late are crowded with instances of servant maids robbing their places, for their whole enquiry nowadays is how little shall they do, how much shall they have. Tea, sugar, wine, etc., are reckoned no thefts ; if they do not directly take your pewter from your shelf or your linen from your drawers they are very honest. If you send them with ready money they turn factors, and take 3*d.* or 4*d.* in the shilling brokerage.

'But the greatest abuse of all is that these creatures are become their own lawgivers ; they hire themselves to you by their own rule. That is, a month's wages, or a month's warning ; if they don't like you they will go away the next day, help yourself how you can ; if you don't like them you must give them a month's wages to get rid of them.

'Besides the fear of spoiling their clothes makes them afraid of household work ; so that in a little time we shall have none but

chambermaids and nurserymaids ; and of this let me give one instance ; my family is composed of myself and sister, a man and a maid and being without the last a young wench came to hire herself. . . . My sister began to enquire what wages she expected ? She modestly asked but £8 a year. The next question was what work could she do to deserve such wages, to which she answered, she could clean a house, or dress a common family dinner. But cannot you wash replied my sister or get up linen ? She answered in the negative, and said she would undertake neither. She desired to see the house, and having carefully surveyed it said the work was too hard for her, nor could she undertake it.'

Defoe tells us that he was once so misled by the finery of a chambermaid as to kiss her in mistake for the mistress of the house. His complaint that maidservants dressed like fine ladies is amusingly echoed as late as 1795 in a letter to *The Times* newspaper.

'I look upon their exorbitant increase of wages as chiefly conducive to their impertinence ; for when they had five or six pounds a year, a month being out of place was severely felt. And what is this increase of wages for ? Not in order to lay by a little in case of sickness, but to squander in dress. No young woman now can bear a strong pair of leather shoes, but they must wear Spanish leather, and so on in every article of dress.'

Defoe's pamphlet was probably much truer of servants in London and the fashionable towns than of those in the country, where customs change less quickly. In Smollett's novel, *Humphry Clinker*, for example, written nearly fifty years later, we read that when Lydia Melford went to Bath she took with her her maid, Winifred Jenkins, and Winifred, a country girl, was horrified by the dishonesty of the Bath servants. One of her letters to a fellow servant in the country house which she has left runs as follows :

'O Molly, the servants at Bath are devils incarnate. They light the candle at both ends. Here 's nothing but wasting and

The Flight from the Plague

Bodleian Library, Sutherland Collection

thieving and tricking, and then they are never content. You must know Molly I missed three quarters of blond lace and a remnant of muslin and my silver thimble ; they were all in my work basket that I left upon the table in the servants' hall when mistress's bell rung ; but if they had been under lock and key it would have been all the same for there are double keys to all the locks in Bath, and they say as how the very teeth aint safe in your head if you sleep with your mouth open. . . . I ketched the charwoman going out with her load in the morning before she thought I was up, and brought her to mistress with her whole cargo. Mary, what dost think she had got, in the name of God ? Her buckets were foaming full of our best beer, and her lap was stuffed with a cold tongue, part of a buttock of beef, half a turkey and a swinging lump of butter, and the matter of ten mould candles, that had scarce ever been lit. The cuck brazoned it out and said it was her right to rummage the pantry ; that she was ready to go before the mayor ; that he would never think of hurting a poor servant for giving away the scraps of the kitchen.'

Defoe's pamphlet, and stories like the above, made it clear that something must be done, and particularly that if servants were to be satisfactory they must be trained for their work. So towards the middle of the eighteenth century wealthy women living in the country began to set up, at their own expense, trade schools in which such training was given.

The school was usually situated near the Manor House, often in its grounds. The Lady of the Manor would provide the building, appoint and pay the teachers, provide all equipment, decide upon the scholars' uniforms, entertain scholars and teachers once or twice a year at the Manor House, and find places in her own household or in those of the neighbouring gentry, for the girls as they were ready to leave.

The uniform was usually warm, comfortable, and ugly ; of harsh material embroidered with the crest or coronet of the family to which the school belonged. The

ONE Mary Raban, a Woman of a pretty tall Stature, thin-Face and Body, of a dark brown Complexion, about 30 years of Age, Servant to Mr. Matthew Kirby, went away from his Father's houſe at Walton in Surrey, on Tueſday the 5th Inſtant. She hath been ſeen in the Strand near Bedford-houſe. Whoever ſhall give Notice of her, to Mr. Kirby at the Five Bells in the Strand, ſo that ſhe may be apprehended, ſhall have 10 Guinea's Reward.

The runaway servant of the Seventeenth Century
Advertisement from 'The London Gazette' of July 11–14, 1687

HANNAH MORE

whose training schools for domestic work helped to better the lot of servants

girls often wore their hair cropped short, and had large round cloaks with tight-fitting hoods for walking out. They came to the school at seven or nine years old and remained till about sixteen.

Food was usually very plain and hours of work very long. Early rising, punctuality, and extreme neatness of dress and humility in behaviour were insisted on. Prayers were said regularly. No reading or writing was taught but only domestic arts—cookery, laundry work, needlework, cleaning, and such duties as ladies' maids and still-room maids were expected to perform. Since it was still apparently the custom to beat servants who did unsatisfactory work the girls were often very harshly treated both at school and afterwards.

Hannah More, a staunch friend of humanity, writing towards the end of the eighteenth century, gives the following account of a school not quite of this kind, but still intended first and foremost for serving girls, managed by two ladies, in a Somerset village.

'Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Betty went every Friday to the school, where they invited mothers, as well as daughters, to come and learn to cut out to the best advantage. Mrs. Jones not only had the girls taught to make and mend, but to wash and iron too. She also allowed the mother or eldest daughter of the family to come once a week, and learn how to dress one cheap dish. One Friday, which was cooking day, who should pass by but the Squire, with his gun and dogs. He looked into the school for the first time. "Well, madam," said he, "what good are you doing here? What are the girls learning and earning? Where are your manufactures? Where is your spinning and carding?" "Sir," said she, "this is a small parish, and you know ours is not a manufacturing county; so that when these girls are women they will not be much employed in spinning. However we teach them a little of it, and still more of knitting, that they may be able to get up a small piece of household linen once a year, and provide the family with stockings. Most of these girls will probably

Equitable Office for Servants,
within Two Doors of ELY-PLACE, *Holborn-Hill.*

A CAUTION to FAMILIES and SERVANTS.

IT having been intimated to Mr. PARR, that ſome Perſons in the above Line have inſinuated, that their Offices are connected with his, by which many Families and Servants who applied to them, have been groſsly impoſed upon; he aſſures the Public, that he has no Concern whatever with any Office, but the above.

Mr. PARR ſincerely wiſhing, that Servants would continue a long time in their Places, both for the comfort of Families and themſelves, offers, as an inducement to this laudable end, the following

Unprecedented Plan,

Without burthening the Public with Subſcriptions to ſupport it, and begs to inform them, that he was the FIRST Perſon who ever offered PREMIUMS to Servants.

Premium of THREE GUINEAS.

Every Servant of All-Work that lives Two Years in one Place, obtained at the above Office, ſhall, on having a good Character from the ſaid Family, receive Half of the above Premium.

Premium of SEVEN GUINEAS.

And every Servant of All-Work having lived Three Years with one Family, obtained at the ſaid Office, ſhall, on producing a good Character, receive Half of the ſaid Premium.

Premium of TEN GUINEAS

Servants of every Deſcription (Men or Women) that live Four Years in one Place, obtained as above, ſhall on having a good Character from ſaid Family, receive Five Guineas.

The remaining Half of each of the ſaid Premiums, will be laid out in Bank Annuities, and the Intereſt, as it becomes due, will be added to the Stock, until the end of Seven Years, commencing from the 1ſt of January, 1794; which ſaid Stock will be inveſted in the Names of Two Truſtees, and at the expiration of the ſaid Term, the whole Sum of Bank Annuities then ſtanding in the Names of the ſaid Truſtees will be ſold, and the Produce divided, Share and Share alike, amongſt the ſurviving Servants who have been partakers of any of the aforeſaid Premiums.

Alſo, a *Premium of* HALF-A-GUINEA

To ſober, induſtrious, and cleanly Boys and Girls, from 14 to 16 Years of Age, on bringing a ſatisfactory proof of their good Behaviour, and having lived Twelve Months in one Place.

The Children of deſerving Poor Parents ſhall be provided with Places, free of expence, and alſo entitled to the above Premium on the aforeſaid Condition.

Thoſe Servants who may have received any of the above Premiums, and ſhould through Sickneſs, or any unforeſeen Misfortune, be in Diſtreſs, they ſhall be relieved on applying to Mr. PARR.

As many Servants neglect letting Mr. PARR know when they are engaged, he particularly requeſts Families will inform him when they are ſuited, as he may not give them, nor Servants, unneceſſary trouble.

Such Servants as do not inform the Clerk when they are provided with a Place, will be excluded from any of the aforeſaid Benefits.

FAMILIES pay TWO SHILLINGS, for every deſcription of Servants,
And when provided, may, if the Servant ſhould not ſuit them, apply for another, any time within two Months from their firſt Application, free of any further expence.

Mr. PARR begs thoſe Families who favor him with Orders, not to treat with any Servants who make uſe of his Name, unleſs they bring a Note ſigned by him, with the *Servant's Name inſerted therein.* Attention to this, will prevent the intruſion of improper Servants upon Families.

*** Orders and Poſtage of Letters muſt be paid for, otherwiſe cannot be attended to.

The Coming of the Registry Office

circular of about the year 1800

become wives to the poor or servants to the rich ; now I intend to propose that such gentry as have sober servants shall allow one of these girls to come and work in their families one day a week when the housekeeper, the cook, the housemaid or the laundry maid shall be required to instruct in their several departments. This I conceive to be the best way of training good servants." '

Of education in the sense that we now use the word, poor girls got little or none, but of this we shall have to speak again.

What kind of a life did girls so trained live when they left school and went into service ? The story of one such girl—Pamela Andrews—was told by Samuel Richardson in a novel published in 1740. Pamela was probably not a real girl, but that there were maids like her we know from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters. When Lady Mary first read the book it struck her how like Pamela was to her own maid, Fanny. She says of the story :

' I believe I was the more struck with it, having at present a Fanny in my own house, not only by the name, which happens to be the same, but the extraordinary beauty, joined with an understanding yet more extraordinary, at her age, which is but few months past sixteen ; she is in the post of my chambermaid. Her mother has an uncommon good character, and the girl has a better education than is usual for those of her rank. She writes a good hand and has been brought up to keep accounts, which she does to great perfection ; and had herself such a violent desire to serve me that I was persuaded to take her. I do not yet repent it from any part of her behaviour—the young creature never stirring from my apartment, always at her needle, and never complaining of anything.'

To tell shortly the story of Pamela will, therefore, throw some light on the kind of life lived by a maid-servant in the middle of the eighteenth century. Pamela's parents were country labourers living the kind of life

that will be described in a later chapter. Her father earned day-wages working on his landlord's estate ; her mother was a spinster. They were a simple-minded, uneducated, affectionate couple, keeping their small savings ' laid up in a rag among the thatch over the window '. Pamela was their only child. While in her teens she became maid to a certain Lady B. who took a great fancy to the beautiful and virtuous girl, and trained her carefully. ' My lady's goodness ', says Pamela in one of her letters, ' had put me to write and cast accounts and made me a little expert at my needle, and otherwise qualified me above my degree.' As a result Pamela, when the story opens, wrote a pretty hand, was encouraged to read her mistress's books, spelt well, played the spinet a little, sent entertaining letters home to her parents, and was always daintily and prettily clothed.

Then suddenly Pamela's mistress died, and her son, Mr. B., became master of the house. He, it appeared, had also taken a great fancy to Pamela. Several times during the week following his mother's death he called Pamela into Lady B.'s room and made her presents from his mother's wardrobe. On one occasion she received ' a suit of my lady's clothes, half a dozen of her shifts and six fine handkerchiefs and three of her cambric aprons and four holland ones. The clothes are fine silk, and too rich and too good for me '.

This last remark will remind us that Pamela had been brought up in the eighteenth-century belief that people were born on a certain social level—on one of several platforms arranged, so to speak, above and below each other and that harm would result if she attempted to move ' out of her station '. She constantly speaks of the ' great gulf fixed by Heaven between such a gentleman and so poor a girl as myself '.

Another day Pamela writes to her parents :

'My master gave me more fine things. He called me up to my late lady's closet, and pulling out her drawers he gave me two suits of fine Flanders laced hand clothes, three pair of fine silk shoes, two hardly the worse and just fit for me, and the other with wrought silver buckles in them and several ribands and top-knots of all colours ; four pair of fine white cotton stockings, and three pair of fine silk ones ; and two pair of rich stays.'

It was very improper, in Pamela's opinion, for her master to give her the stockings. He ought at least to have waited to do so till the housekeeper was present ! She began to suspect that he meditated some harm to her, and to think of seeking another situation. During this time she writes to her parents :

'I work very hard with my needle upon his linen, and the fine linen of the family and am besides about flowering him a waistcoat.'

Presently Pamela's fears were justified ; her master began making love to her. Her parents became alarmed by her letters, and besought her to leave her situation and go home to them. Pamela was quite willing to do so. She longed, so she wrote, for her grey russet gown and her little bed in the loft. She made plans for ekeing out by her needle her father's diligent labour and her mother's spinning. She faced cheerfully the prospect of living on rye bread and water as she used to do. She made plans for arriving home suitably clothed.

'I thought to myself [she writes] : Here shall I go home to my poor father and mother and have nothing on my back that will be fit for my condition, for how would your poor daughter look with a silk nightgown, silken petticoats, cambric headclothes, fine Holland linen, laced shoes that were my lady's ! So thought I, I had better get myself at once equipped in the dress that will become my condition.

'So unknown to anybody, I bought of farmer Nichol's wife

and daughters a good sad coloured stuff of their own spinning, enough to make me a gown and two petticoats, and I made rovings and facings of a pretty bit of quilted calico I had by me.

'I had a pretty good camblet quilted coat, that I thought might do tolerably well, and I bought two flannel undercoats, not so good as my swan skin and fine linen ones, but what will keep me warm if my neighbours should get me to go out to help 'em to milk now and then, as sometimes I used to do.

'I got some pretty good Scots cloth and made me, at morning and nights, two shifts, and I have enough left for two shirts, and two shifts, for you, my dear father and mother.

'Then I bought of a pedlar two pretty enough round eared caps, a little straw hat and a pair of knit mittens turned up with white calico, and two pair of ordinary blue worsted hose that make a smartish appearance with white clocks, I'll assure you, and two yards of black riband for my shift sleeves, and to serve as a necklace, and when I had 'em all come home, I went and looked upon them once in two hours for two days together.

'So as I was saying I have provided a new and more suitable dress and I long to appear in it more than ever I did in any new clothes in my life. When I had dined upstairs I went and locked myself in my little room. There I tucked myself up as well as I could in my new garb, and put on my round eared ordinary cap, but with a green knot however, and my homespun gown and petticoat, and plain leather shoes ; but yet they are what they call Spanish leather. A plain muslin tucker I put on, and my black silk necklace instead of the French necklace my lady gave me, and put the earrings out of my ears, and when I was quite equipped I took my straw hat in my hand, with its two green strings, and looked about me in the glass, as proud as anything. To say the truth, I never liked myself so well in my life.'

The picture on p. 157 shows what Pamela herself saw in the looking-glass.

Pamela regretted that her education and her pleasant life as lady's maid had unfitted her for the rough work to which she would be going.

'What a sad thing it is,' she wrote, 'I have been brought up wrong, as matters stand. For you know that my good lady, now

in heaven, loved singing and dancing ; and as she would have it I had a voice, she made me learn both ; and often and often has she made me sing her an innocent song, and a good psalm too, and dance before her ; and I must learn to flower and draw too, and to work fine work with my needle.

'So I shall make a fine figure with my singing and dancing when I come home to you ! To be sure, I had better, as things stand, have learned to wash and scour and brew and bake and such like. I t'other day tried, when Rachel's back was turned, if I could not scour a pewter plate she had begun. I see I could do it by degrees ; it only blistered my hand in two places.'

But Pamela was not to get home without a struggle. Her master had taken a greater fancy to her than she imagined, and was determined to keep, but not to marry her, since she was 'beneath his station'. First he ordered her to stay another fortnight, and then pretended to be very angry with her and dismissed her. He sent her away in his chariot, but the coachman had secret orders, and instead of driving her home, took her to a country house in Lincolnshire which was part of Mr. B.'s property. Here Pamela was given into the care of the housekeeper, Mrs. Jewkes, a wicked and unscrupulous woman, who kept her a close prisoner. Her parents were allowed to write to her but not to know her whereabouts. Her father came on foot, travelling all night, to Mr. B.'s house to beg for news of her, but being a humble poor man, dared not insist on his rights or seek the help of the law. The same thing happened to Pamela in Lincolnshire. She sought help of a local clergyman and through him of the local landed gentry, but none of the latter would offend Mr. B., and as for the clergy, to protest would have lost them their livings. To every one, apparently, a man's maid was his property, to do with as he would, and no one had the power or the

The Maid Servant as she appeared in 1750

From Dodds's 'Magdalen Hospital'

'I can milk, churn, fother, bake, brew, sheer, wind, card, spin, knit, sew, and do everything that belongs to a husbandman, as well as any lass that ever wore clogs'. Margery. In Reed's farce, 'The Registry Office', 1758

right to protest. Once, for example, Mr. B. even threatened to marry Pamela to his curate. He did not mean it, but no one seems to have thought it strange that he should make such a suggestion without securing the consent of either party.

But Pamela remained firm. She refused all the dishonourable offers which Mr. B. made to her, and withstood his threats and his violence. In the end he was so impressed by her virtue and strength of character, as he had already been by her beauty, that he offered to marry her. Pamela, who had loved him all along, accepted willingly. As she wrote to her parents, 'with all his ill usage of me, I cannot hate him'.

Now came the time when Pamela was to be introduced to her husband's friends and relations on the higher social platform. They, and especially Mr. B.'s sister, Lady Davers, were amazed and furious that he should have stooped so low. At first they were not merely insufferably condescending, but positively insulting, to Pamela. By degrees, however, Pamela's beauty and gentleness conquered them as it had conquered her husband. 'So she grew a noble lady, and the people loved her much.' All her former fellow workers remained her faithful and devoted servants, and she carried out carefully and well the duties of Lady of the Manor on both of Mr. B.'s estates. What those duties were and how Pamela discharged them we shall tell in a later chapter.

It will hardly do to think of Pamela Andrews as a typical servant, although maids who married their masters have always been common enough. Leigh Hunt, writing almost a century after Pamela first delighted the world of novel-readers, drew a careful and charming picture of the maidservant of his day, 1820, which may very fittingly end this chapter. He calls it 'The Maid Servant',

G R

THese are to Certify, whom it may Concern
THAT James Rowe of the
Parish of Bennett and Ba
and Sarah Carrier of the same
Place Spinster

were MARRIED in the Præcinct of the *Fleet*,
LONDON: On the - 30 th — Day of
November according to the Rites and
Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, as appears
by the Register in the Custody of

John Wheler
Register

Register'd at the *Hand* and *Pen*, and *Flower De luce*
in *Turn-again-Lane*. near *Holbourn-Bridge London*.

Jn° Aloud Min:

A Fleet marriage-certificate

Reproduced by the courtesy of the editor of 'The Connoisseur'

The same day, the Master of the Rolls committed a Clergyman to the Fleet, for marrying a young Gentleman, about 17, at Eaton school, and intitled to 1500l. per ann. to a servant maid; and at the same time committed the person who gave her in marriage. His Honour some days since had sent prisoner to the Fleet the person who pretended to be the youth's Guardian, and had given a bond to indemnify the Parson. *D J.* —— *By carrying on the trade of* marrying *in the* Flee, *this* Clergyman, *I suppos*, *will turn his* punishment *into* preferment.

From 'The Grub-street Journal' of 29 July 1731

STAG HUNT and FOX CHASE.

ROYAL CIRCUS,

The Company at the CIRCUS beg leave to acquaint the Nobility, Gentry, and Public, that Young CROSSMAN will appear

THIS and every EVENING next Week, on HORSEBACK, and challenge all the Horſemen in Europe.

FRICASSEE DANCING, VAULTING, TIGHT-ROPE DANCING, PYRAMIDS, GROUND and LOFTY TUMBLING, &c. &c. &c.

The Performance will commence with a Grand Entry of Horſes, mounted by the Troop.

Young CROSSMAN's unparalleled Peaſant Hornpipe, and Flag-Dance, not to be equalled by any Horſeman in this Kingdom.

LE GRAND SAUT DE TRAMPOLINE, by Mr PORTER, (Clown) who will jump over a Garter 15 Feet from the Ground, and fire off two Piſtols.

THE MUSICAL CHILD, (Only Nine Years of Age) will go through his wonderful Performance.

Mr. SMITH will go through a Variety of Performances on a Single Horſe.

THE HUMOURS OF THE SACK,

Or, The CLOWN deceived by a Woman;

FRICASSEE DANCE,

By Mr. CROSSMAN and Mr. PORTER.

Mr. INGHAM (from Dublin) will throw an innumerable Row of Flipflaps.

Mr. CROSSMAN will vault over the Horſe backwards and forwards, with his Legs Tied, in a manner not to be equalled by any Performer in this Kingdom.

GROUND and LOFTY TUMBLING, by the whole Troop.

The AFRICAN will go through his aſtoniſhing Stage and Equeſtrian Performances.

LA FORCE DE HERCULES;

Or, The RUINS OF TROY.

Mr. PORTER will perform on a ſingle Horſe, in a ludicrous manner.

Young CROSSMAN will leap from a ſingle Horſe over Two Garters, 12 feet high, and alight again on the Saddle, and Play the Violin in various Attitudes.

The TAYLOR's DISASTER,

Or, his Wonderful Journey to BRENTFORD,

By Mr. PORTER.

To conclude with a REAL FOX and STAG CHASE, by twelve couple of Hounds, and two real FOXES, and a real STAG HUNT, as perform'd before their Majeſties.

Breaking and Teaching as uſual.

A Circus advertisement from a newspaper, about 1800

A Female Wire Dancer, at Sadler's Wells.

'I was afterwards of a party at Sadler's Wells, where I saw such tumbling and dancing upon ropes and wires, that I was ready to go into a fit'

Winifred Jenkins to Mrs. Mary Jones. (*'Humphry Clinker'. Smollett.*)

and one can imagine the grumbling housewives of to-day wishing that such maids were still to be had.

'The Maid-servant, in her apparel, is either slovenly and fine by turns, and dirty always; or she is at all times snug and neat, and dressed according to her station. In the latter case, her ordinary dress is black stockings, a stuff gown, a cap, and a neck-handkerchief pinned cornerwise behind. If you want a pin, she just feels about her, and has always one to give you. On Sundays and holidays, and perhaps of afternoons, she changes her black stockings for white, puts on a gown of better texture and fine pattern, sets her cap and her curls jauntily, and lays aside the neck-handkerchief for a high-body, which, by the way, is not half so pretty. . . .

'The general furniture of her ordinary room, the kitchen, is not so much her own as her Master's and Mistress's, and need not be described: but in a drawer of the dresser or the table, in company with a duster and a pair of snuffers, may be found some of her property, such as a brass thimble, a pair of scissors, a thread-case, a piece of wax much wrinkled with the thread, an odd volume of *Pamela*, and perhaps a sixpenny play, such as *George Barnwell*, or Mrs. Behn's *Oroonoko*. There is a piece of looking-glass in the window. The rest of her furniture is in the garret, where you may find a good looking-glass on the table, and in the window a Bible, a comb and a piece of soap. Here stands also, under stout lock and key, the mighty mystery,—the box,—containing, among other things, her clothes, two or three song-books, consisting of nineteen for the penny; sundry Tragedies at a halfpenny the sheet; the *Whole Nature of Dreams Laid Open*, together with the *Fortune-teller* and the *Account of the Ghost of Mrs. Veal*; the *Story of the Beautiful Zoa* "who was cast away on a desart island, showing how", etc.; some half-crowns in a purse, including pieces of country-money, with the good Countess of Coventry on one of them, riding naked on a horse; a silver penny wrapped up in cotton by itself; a crooked sixpence, given her before she came to town, and the giver of which has either forgotten or been forgotten by her, she is not sure which;—two little enamel boxes, with looking-glass in the lids, one of them a fairing, the other "a Trifle from Margate"; and lastly, various letters, square and ragged, and directed in all sorts of spellings, chiefly with little

letters for capitals. One of them, written by a girl who went to a day-school, is directed "Miss". . . .

'She scorns, when abroad, to be anything but a creature of sheer enjoyment. The Maid-servant when she first goes to Vauxhall, thinks she is in heaven. A theatre is all pleasure to her, whatever is going forward, whether the play or the music, or the waiting which makes others impatient, or the munching of apples and gingerbread, which she and her party commence almost as soon as they have seated themselves. She prefers tragedy to comedy, because it is grander, and less like what she meets with in general; and because she thinks it more in earnest also, especially in the love-scenes. Another great delight is in going a shopping. She loves to look at the pictures in the windows, and the fine things labelled with those corpulent numerals of "only 7*s.*"—"only 6*s.* 6*d.*". She has also, unless born and bred in London, been to see my Lord Mayor, the fine people coming out of Court, and the "beasties" in the Tower; and at all events she has been to Astley's and the Circus, from which she comes away, equally smitten with the rider, and sore with laughing at the clown. But it is difficult to say what pleasure she enjoys most. One of the completest of all is the fair, where she walks through an endless round of noise, and toys, and gallant apprentices, and wonders. Here she is invited in by courteous and well-dressed people, as if she were a mistress. Here also is the conjuror's booth, where the operator himself, a most stately and genteel person all in white, calls her Ma'am: and says to John by her side, in spite of his laced hat, "Be good enough, sir, to hand the card to the lady." Ah! may her "cousin" turn out as true as he says he is; or may she get home soon enough and smiling enough to be as happy again next time.'

May she indeed!

V

WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

'I have often thought of it as one of the most barbarous customs in the world, that we deny the advantages of learning to women.' —DANIEL DEFOE, 1697.

WE saw in Chapter III, where the life of a woman of fashion was described, that the poor 'furnishing of a woman's mind' disposed women to neglect the inside of their heads in favour of adorning very ridiculously the outside. Swift's harsh verses on the empty-pated woman have already been quoted. But it should be remembered that many women in Swift's day, many even among the women of fashion, were not so frivolous and stupid as would appear from Swift's bitter sneers.

Swift writes as if all wisdom, wit, and knowledge had clean departed from the women of his generation. It was not so; and even Swift himself (in a tenderer mood) praises for her wit a woman whom he had loved, and compliments another who had loved him, for her grace and learning. Good women, such as Congreve's friend,

Lady Gethin, were writing rather dull books, and worldly women like Swift's friend, Mrs. Manley, were writing amusing books. Clever women like Lady Mary Wortley Montagu were even beginning to criticize the books and journals written by their lords and masters. At least one woman, Mary Beale, was celebrated as a painter. She learned her craft from Sir Peter Lely (he is said to have been her lover as well as her master), who painted a charming portrait of Dorothy Osborne. And the novels of Swift's day, which Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was so impatient to read—'Saturday came and no book' (she writes), 'God forgive me, I had certainly wished the lady who was to send it me hanged'—and which when they did come, she read so impatiently, were almost all written by women.

Yet there is much truth in Swift's picture of the vanities and follies of the fashionable women of his day. Moreover, such women were becoming more common, and therefore much the more noticeable, at the time when Swift wrote his verses. Sober-minded people saw with alarm the spread of luxurious and light living among well-born English women at the beginning of the eighteenth century. They complained that the homely virtues of their grandmothers were gone out of fashion, neglected, and even completely forgotten. Various plans to make women better and wiser were discussed. One of these plans was for the better education of women, and this brings us to the subject of this chapter.

How were women educated at the time when Swift was writing? If by education we mean book-learning, the answer is that many, nay, most women, received no education at all. Poor women could neither read, nor write, nor cast up accounts. It is true that the more intelligent taught themselves to read from the 'chap-

books ', that is, cheap paper-backed books, which were hawked about the countryside by men and women.

These little books, which are now bought at a great price by the curious, were printed in large numbers up and down the country and especially in London, Banbury, Manchester, and Newcastle-on-Tyne. They told tales of magic, of mysteries, of murders, of love, and of adventure; there were sad tales for tender-hearted serving-maids, and merry tales for the light-hearted apprentice. And since people are known by the books they read, it may be useful to give here at least the titles of some of the old ' chap books '.

A certain Dr. Will King, who wrote about the same time as Dean Swift, tells us that people could choose from the chapman's pack not only the book which they took to be a good story but even books which would suit with their particular occupations. ' The Good-woman ' (Dr. King writes) ' asks for Boyle's Family Receipts, the Shoemaker for Crispin and Crispianus, the Charcoal-man for Grim the *Collier* of Croydon, the Taylor for *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, the Pastry Cook for The Man that was choak'd with Custard at Newberry, the Young Heiress, for Love letters between a *Nun and a Cavalier* or a *Nobleman and his Sister*, and the Despairing Lover for the Play of *Cupid's Whirligig*.'

In these chap-books, verse was often preferred to prose; and of course the ballads were always in verse. In Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler*, written when Swift was a boy, the fisherman takes his friend the hunter into an ' honest alehouse ' where they find ' a cleanly room, lavender in the windows, and twenty ballads stuck about the wall.' The ballad-singer was the poet and musician of the poor ; the chap-book seller their newsmonger and journalist. A few, but a very few, more expensive books were treasured up by

ADVERTISEMENTS.

I shall go the Round of Publishing. I. Physicians *and* Chyrurgeons. II. Lawyers *and* Attorneys. III. Schools, *and* Woodmongers. IV Coaches *and* Carriers, *and such like*; *and then* Physicians, *and so round again if desired*: *And if any would see the Lists not here, 'tis but looking* One, Two, *or* Three *Numbers back*, *and they may have their desire. And any in* England, *if it be reputable for me, may be thus incerted.*

WOODMONGER

MR Worster, *as Crows-nest.*
Mr. Pettit, *at Harts-horn Brew-house.*
Mr Twin, *at Iron-gate.*
Mr Inwood, *and* Belchor, *near Dyers-Hall.*
Mr. Hatch, *at Cole-harbour.*
Mr. Mariot, *at Still-yard.*
Mr. Speed, *at Dowgate.*
Mr Throswell.
Mr. Lupton.
Mrs Butterfield, *at Three Cranes.*
Mr. Lilly.
Mr. Jackson, *at Queedhithe.*
Mr. Millard, *at*
Mr. Vere, *at Baynard-Castle.*
Mr. Searle.
Mr. Kempe.
Mr. Blackham, *at St. Mary Overies Dock.*
Mr. Ferrys.

SCHOOLS.

BOARDING.

MRs. Dyer, *Greenwich.*
Mrs Freeman, *Hackney.*
Mrs Beckford, *Hackney.*
Mrs. Smith, *Hackney.*
Mrs. Ashman, *Mile-end.*
Mrs Palfryman, *Bednalgreen.*
Mrs. Priest, *Chelsey.*
Mrs Hazard, *Kensington.*

DANCING.

MR. Barker, *Lombury*
Mr Holt, *St Bartholomew lane.*
Mr. Hughes, *Cornhil.*
Mr. Couch, *Stocks-market*
Mr. Eccleshield, *Potter-noster-row.*

FENCING.

MR. *Waldund. Outropers-Office.*
Mr Forster, *Leadenhall-street*
Captain Crisp, *Walbrook.*

PRENCH.

MR *Greenwich.*
Mr. Maliard, *Wheelers-street*

GRAMMAR.

DR Udal, *Enfield.*
Mr. Tolley, *Kensington.*
Mr. Day, *Cheame.*
Mr. Ogilvy, *Coleman-stret.*
Dr Busby, *Westminster.*
Dr. Gale, *St. Paul's*
Mr Shorting, *Merchant-Taylors.*
Mr. Young, *Greenwich.*
Mr. Turner, *Lysham.*
Mr Bayford, *Chesthunt.*
Mr Chaddock, *Totenham.*
Mr Haines, *Bednal-green.*
Mr. Baxter, *Totenham.*
Mr. Reynolds, *Colchester.*
Mr Pate, *Yarmouth.*

MATHEMATICAL.

MR Williams, *Cornhill.*
Mr. Colson, *Goodman's-Fields.*
Mr. Coley, *Balwin's-Garden.*
Mr. Salt, *Broad-Street.*
Mr Hindmarsh, *Armitage.*
Mr Newton, *Wapping.*
Mr. Linton, *Ratcliff-cross.*
Mr. White, *near Tiverton.*

WRITING.

MR Smith, *Christ's-Hospital.*
Mr Orpheur, *Poultrey.*
Mr. Chalmer, *St. James's.*
Mr. Shrowsbridge, *Whitechappel.*
Mr Marshal, *Spittle-fields.*
Mr. Lane, *Houndsditch.*
Mr, Higgins, *Philpot-lane.*
Mr Clifton, *Bloomsbury*
Mr Aires, *St. Paul's Church-yard.*

A list of eighteenth-century Schools, including those which were purely commercial

From Houghton's 'Collection', 29 June 1694

poor people, but even the rich, unless they were book lovers, possessed few books. The poor woman's library, apart from the ballads 'stuck about the wall' (a fashion, by the way, newly revived by the girl undergraduate), usually consisted of pious books such as *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Practice of Piety*, and *God's Revenge against Murther*, all of which, says Charles Gildon, old women left 'as a legacy to posterity'.

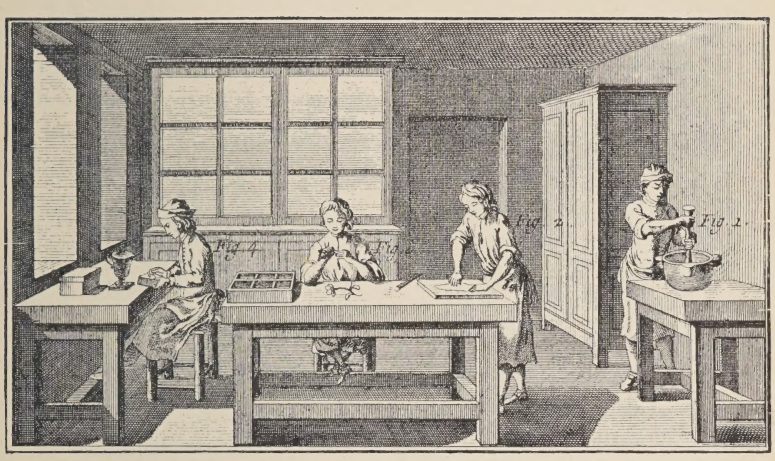
But if the working woman in the early eighteenth century was poor in book-learning, she was expected to be rich in practical knowledge, in baking and in brewing, in cleansing and preserving, and in the art of medicine. This last sounds strange to modern ears, and some of the remedies in which women (rich and poor alike) put their trust, were even stranger. Here, for example, is part of a letter written by Mrs. Delaney, a friend of Dean Swift and a cultivated woman:

'Clarges Street, March 1, 1743.

'. . . I am very much concerned for my dear godson, but hope before this reaches you that his ague will have left him. Two *infallible receipts* I must insert before I proceed further. 1st. Pounded ginger, made into a paste with brandy, spread on sheep's leather and a plaister of it laid over the stomach. 2ndly. A spider put into a goose-quill, well sealed and secured, and hung about the child's neck as low as the pit of his stomach. Either of these I am assured, will ease. . . . Adieu.'

Here is a cure for rickets from Boyle's *Family Receipts*, the domestic bible for eighteenth-century women:

'Open a vein in both ears between the Junctures, mix a little Aqua-vitae with the Blood, and with it anoint the Breast, Sides and Neck: then take 3 ounces of the green Ointment, and warm a little of it in a Spoon, and anoint the Wrists and Ancles as hot as it may be endured: do this for 9 Nights just before Bed-time; shift not the shirt all the time. If the Veins do not appear, rub it with a little lint dipped in Aqae-vitae, or else cause the child to cry, and that will make the Veins more visible and bleed the better.'



Making Pastry

From 'Recueil de Planches', Paris 1762–7

ABout 40 Miles from *London* is a *Schoolmaſter* has had ſuch Succeſs with Boys, as there are almoſt 40 Miniſters and Schoolmaſters that were his Scholars. His Wife alſo teaches Girls *Lace-making*, *Plain Work*, *Raiſing Paſte*, *Sauces*, and *Cookery* to the Degree of Exactneſs. His Price is 10 or 11 *l.* the Year, with a *Pair of Sheets* and *Spoon* to be returned if deſired. *Coaches* and other Conveniencies paſs every Day within half a Mile of the Houſe; and 'tis but an eaſie Days Journey to or from *London*.

An advertisement from Houghton's 'Collection' for 25 December 1696

After which one can hardly be surprised that many children in the eighteenth century preferred to die young.

But an even clearer idea of the gap which separates the modern educated woman from her illiterate eighteenth-century sister may be got by considering the recreations of serving-maids in town and country.

Superstition—always a mark of the uneducated mind—played a large part in these amusements and especially in the love-spells practised during the long winter evenings. Thus, if a girl was so lucky as to have two lovers and wished to know which of them would best keep true faith, all she had to do was to name two kernels of an apple with the names of her two lovers, and stick them in either cheek, when the kernel which kept its hold longest would disclose the more honest of the lovers. To discover which of two lovers loved her most she threw two hazel-nuts on the fire, and the one that blazed brightest pointed to the lover after whom it was named. If a young maiden wished to discover a lover who was too bashful to declare himself, she took a snail on May Day and laid it on the ashes of a cold hearth, whereupon the intelligent creature would not fail to trace in the ashes the name of the undeclared lover. Certain rhymes, if repeated in due season and with the appropriate rites, were thought to have power to raise the spirit of a lover. The charm below is from *Mother Bunch's Closet Newly Broke Open*—a very popular chap-book in the eighteenth century.

'Take hemp seed, and go into what place you will by yourself, carry the seed in your apron, and with your right hand throw it over your shoulder saying :

Hemp-seed I sow, hemp-seed I sow
And he that must be my true love,
Come after me and mow.'

For venturesome maids there was the sword charm:

'You that dare venture into a churchyard just as it strikes twelve at night take a naked sword in your hand, and go nine times about the church saying:

"Here 's the sword, but where 's the scabbard?"

and at the ninth time expect to see the figure of him you are to wed. Tried and as often approved.'

Fortune-tellers and quacks found women an easy prey. For the sum of 6*d*. they would profess to tell an anxious serving-maid the exact whereabouts of her master's silver spoons (stolen while she gossiped with the footman) or the matrimonial intentions of the handsome young apprentice who so obligingly escorted her home from the Bear pit at Hockley-in-the-Hole last holiday time. And other equally desirable things to know as thus:

'At the White Hart, in Gray's Inn Lane, near the Queen's Head, liveth Mrs. Stothards, who answers all lawful questions; as, whether life shall be happy or unhappy? and what manner of person one shall marry? and when? and whether the best time be past or to come? and whether a friend be real or not? and all other rational demands; and, knowing their nativity or time of birth, discovers what accidents shall be likely to happen in all their lives. She tells the signification of moles in any part of the body, and gives a very excellent interpretation of dreams, discovering what events are likely to happen thereby. Advice for 6*d*.

'Go up one pair of stairs without asking.'

But enough has been said to show that women, especially poor women, were ignorant. Education, in the early eighteenth century, was a luxury for the few; nor was it to be expected that education, when they got it, would better the poor, if it were to be similar in kind to that which the well-born and the rich provided for their daughters. What that education was we shall speak of immediately, but first it should be remembered that the deficiencies in

higher education, as they were to be observed in the conduct and accomplishments of women in the polite world, were strongly condemned by sensible people. Daniel Defoe wrote in 1697 *An Essay Upon Projects*, that is, upon improvements.

One of these 'Projects' was for 'An Academy for Women', copied, doubtless, from an idea of Milton's, who many years earlier had proposed a similar Academy, but for young men, in his famous *Tractate Upon Education*. Defoe sums up and condemns the then fashionable education for women, in a curt paragraph. 'One would wonder, indeed [he says] how it should happen that women are conversible at all, since they are only beholden to natural parts for their knowledge. Their youth is spent to teach them to sew and to make baubles. They are taught to read, indeed, and perhaps to write their names or so, and that is the height of a woman's education.' He proposes to build a women's college, specially designed in shape and approach, so that young men (who might presumably divert the ladies from their studies as did actually happen in that other ideal Academy for women pictured in Tennyson's *Princess*) should find it difficult to enter. 'In this house the persons who enter [Defoe says] should be taught, in particular, music and dancing, but besides this languages, particularly French and Italian. They should be taught all the graces of Speech and all the necessary air of conversation. They should be taught to read books and especially history, so as to make them understand the world, and be able to know and judge of things when they hear of them.'

Nothing is here, one may observe, about the education of poor girls, and nothing, save the hard saying about history, of an education designed to enrich a woman's powers of mind or to refine her spirit. And yet even in

Mistress and maid visit the Fortune-teller

From an edition of the Tatler 1785

this, so meagre a conception of what a right education rightly directed might do for women, Defoe was notably in advance of his time. It is true that Joseph Addison, in the *Spectator*, supported Defoe ; but he was quicker to see the defects in women's education than to suggest how they might be remedied, and this in spite of the fact that one of his contributors wrote at length and very sensibly on the teaching of English composition—to boys only. Many other writers of the day echoed Addison's complaint that the chief occupation of women was killing time, and that not always in harmless pastimes.

But if women's education was conceived as nothing more than the complete art of pleasing—how could it be expected that women would make an intelligent use of leisure ? And that fashionable education for women was in effect the art of pleasing may readily be seen in a dozen authors of the period. Let us take but one illustration from an author who knew the fashionable world as his birthright. Henry Fielding, one of the greatest of English novelists, wrote a farce called *An Old Man Taught Wisdom*, which was acted at the Theatre Royal by his Majesty's Servants in the year 1734. The plot turns on an old man's plans for marrying his only daughter, an heiress, but as ill conditioned and absurd as the most foolish maid in her father's house. To her come several suitors, an apothecary, a lawyer, a dancing-master, a singing-master. Lucy pretends to prefer them each in turn, although Thomas, her father's good-looking young footman, really has her heart. Coupee, the dancing-master, is indignant because Lucy is uninstructed in the dance.

'Why Madam,' he says, 'not learning to dance is absolute ruin to a young lady. I suppose your father took care enough you should learn to read.'

Lucy. Yes, I can read very well and spell too.

Coupee. Ay, there it is; why now, that 's more than I can do. All parents take care to instruct their children in low mechanical things while the genteel sciences are neglected.'

Lucy's pride in being able to read and even to spell was not unfounded. Mrs. Tabitha Bramble's mistakes may be seen on p. 266 and the blunders of Mrs. Malaprop, a near relative of Tabitha Bramble, have become proverbial. Quaver, the singing-master, is equally convinced that his art is all that is necessary to a complete education. 'Music [he says] is allowed by all wise men to be the noblest of the sciences: whoever knows music knows everything.' In those days it was, indeed, not too difficult a matter to know everything which was thought requisite for a young lady to know. If to the genteel sciences of music and dancing is added the arts of the boudoir, the sewing and 'bauble making', as Defoe terms it, we shall have a fairly complete sum of all the education which a fine lady of the world was mistress of.

Of course there were exceptions, some of whom have been already mentioned. There was the book-loving 'Leonora', who wrote asking the *Spectator* to recommend reading lists for ladies; there was the famous Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; there was that other Mrs. Montagu, one of the original 'blue-stockings'; there was (a little later) the learned Elizabeth Carter, a friend of Dr. Johnson, acquainted with eight languages, and a proficient in Greek. Women who commanded such learning as these women had would be notable in our day and were extraordinary in the early eighteenth century. Of these exceptional women 'Leonora', the *Spectator's* correspondent, is not the least interesting, although beyond the mere fact of her name (Miss Shepheard, afterwards Mrs. Perry) very little is known of her. But Addison

has left us a list of her books which may very fairly be taken as representing the library of a well-read woman of the time, one who was

Unbred to spinning, in the loom unskilled.

Here it is, and with these 'boudoir books' should be compared the poor old woman's books as given by Gildon, the critic of Defoe, quoted on p. 168, and the books of 'Harriet B.'s' mother, mentioned on p. 201.

Ogleby's Virgil.
Dryden's Juvenal.
Cassandra.
Cleopatra.
Astrea.
Sir Isaac Newton's Works.
The Grand Cyrus; with a pin stuck in one of the middle leaves.
Pembroke's Arcadia.
Locke on Human Understanding; with a paper of patches in it.
A Spelling Book.
A Dictionary for the explanation of hard words.
Sherlock upon Death.
The Fifteen Comforts of Matrimony.
Sir William Temple's Essays.
Father Malebranche's Search after Truth, translated into English.
A Book of Novels.
The Academy of Compliments.
Culpepper's Midwifery.
The Ladies Calling.
All the Classic Authors.
Clelia; which opened of itself in the place that describes two lovers in a bower.
Baker's Chronicle.
Advice to a Daughter.
The New Atalantis, with a Key to it.
Mr. Steele's Christian Hero.
A Prayer Book.
Dr. Sacheverell's Speech.
Fielding's Trial.
Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.
La Ferte's Instruction for Country Dances.

Most of these books are forgotten now, and most of the rest mere names, but the novels and romances (distinguished above by the italic type), and the pious books in Leonora's library, should have a word of com-

The Minuet, from a drawing by Bunbury

'He is excessively fond of dancing a minuet with the ladies, by which is only meant walking round the floor eight or ten times affecting great gravity, and some times looking tenderly on his partner.'
Goldsmith. The Citizen of the World. Letter IX

The Waltz, from a cartoon of 1812

ment because both had their share in women's education. The good books were intended to educate the young lady into pious habits ; she, very naturally, preferred the novels. Prior puts it neatly :

> So Cleopatra was read o'er,
> While Scot, and Wake, and twenty more,
> That teach one to deny oneself,
> Stood unmolested on the shelf.

All the novels but two in Leonora's list are romances translated from French writers of the seventeenth century. These ' heroick ' romances, as they are called, were concerned with ' the Constant Loves and invincible Courages of Hero's, Heroins, Kgs and Qns, Mortals of the first Rank, and so forth ', to use Congreve's description, but the plots were so long-winded that not until twelve books or so, each of the size of a family bible, were completed, was the brave allowed to deserve the fair. However, from Dorothy Osborne to Fielding's day they seem to have ' elevated and surprised readers into a giddy Delight ', and these readers were chiefly women of the leisured class. That women who had little to do should read idle tales is hardly surprising, but it distressed those who, like Defoe, wished to see women well informed and sensible. Thus a critic in *The Gentleman's Journal*, one of the first of the periodicals (1693), exclaimed against the short story fiction found in its pages:

> ' Fables, Songs, Poetry, Novels, What shall a Man get by all this ? I would not have my Children read it for the World ; in the first place Fables they shall not read whilst Truth is to be found. . . . Poetry will but inflame their Blood and Novels teach them how to Cool it.'

The *Spectator* warns young ladies against reading novels, which along with chocolate, and especially in the month of May, were thought to ' inflame the blood '.

Theatre and Concert tickets engraved by Hogarth, 1732

Charlot, the heroine of the best-known novel of Swift's day, Mrs. Manley's *The New Atalantis*, is brought up by a careful guardian who determines that she shall be 'Educated in the high road to Applause and Virtue', and to that end he 'banish'd far from her conversation whatever would not Edify, airy *Romances*, *Plays*, dangerous Novels'. It was all in vain.

Defoe, as has been seen, was persuaded that history could not fail to 'Edify', and therefore he recommends the study of history as likely to make women serious minded. Others put more faith in books of devotion, of which Law's *Serious Call*, and *The Ladies Calling*, were first favourites. Steele, like his friend Addison, was utterly opposed to novel reading for women, and for the same reason. In an essay on the 'Employment of Women', which is to be found in his once popular *Ladies' Library*, he exhorts his readers to shun the 'Galant Writers' for 'insensibly they lead the Heart to Love. Let them therefore [he writes] be avoided with Care: for there are elegant Writers enough on Moral and Divine Subjects'. But, despite exhortation, entreaty, and reproof, fashionable young women continued to read the fashionable novels of Mrs. Manley, Eliza Haywood, or Jane Barker, and even to take them to church cunningly disguised as prayer-books. Let us hope the young ladies were not so susceptible as Dorinda, the inflammable heroine in a novel of Jane Barker's, who read romances so ardently that she 'fancy'd every spruce young Footman some Prince or Hero in disguise, like Dorus in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, a fancy which, after Dorinda's rash marriage to her father's footman, she no longer had any excuse for indulging.

There is one book, a godly book, not in Leonora's list, *The Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* of William Law,

which one ought at this moment to find particularly edifying, although hardly in the sense in which the writer intended it. For it contains, in the character of the good Eusebia, a picture of the ideal woman as she was thought of by the eighteenth-century righteously minded together with some account of Eusebia's five virgin daughters, their education and upbringing. 'No education [declares Eusebia] can be of true advantage to young women, but that which trains them up in *humble industry*, in *great plainness* of life, in exact modesty of dress, manners, and carriage, and in *strict devotion*. For what should a Christian woman be, but a plain, unaffected, modest, humble creature.' An education, it will be seen, of morals rather than of mind, and liable, unfortunately, to train up feminine Uriah Heeps as well as Eusebias. And yet it had at least the merit of being useful. If Eusebia thought good 'to make her daughters and her maids, meet together at all the hours of prayer in the day, and chant Psalms and other devotions', yet she does not omit to 'bring them up to all kinds of labour that are proper for women, as sewing, knitting, spinning, and all other parts of housewifery'; and all this 'not for their own Amusement but that they may be serviceable to themselves and others'. To be serviceable to themselves and to others was at least more than could be said of Farmer Bragwell's girls, of whom we speak later, although they had their breeding in a fashionable boarding-school. And speaking of Farmer Bragwell one is reminded of that other 'bragwell' of an earlier generation, wife of the Vicar of Wakefield, and the 'capacity', as Mrs. Primrose called it, of her two daughters.

'I will be bold to say [says Mrs. Primrose] my two girls have had a pretty good education and capacity; at least the country can't show better. They can read, write and cast accounts; they

understand their needle, broad-stitch, cross and changes and all manner of plain work, they can pink, paint and frill, and know something of music ; they can do up small clothes and work upon catgut, my eldest can cut paper, and my youngest has a very pretty manner of telling fortunes upon the cards.'

To all of which an impatient listener replied, ' Fudge ! ' But we must return to our notable women.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the second on our list of book-loving women and the last whom we shall consider, was a daughter of Lord Kingston, and was born in 1689. She had Dorothy Osborne's passion for books, and as a child spent many hours in her father's library, where she taught herself Greek and Latin. Always she was a voracious novel-reader, and even when quite young could have passed a very creditable examination in those French romances included in Leonora's library. There is (or was) in existence an early note-book of hers, in which she had written in a clear round hand the names and some comments on the characters of these old tales. And in extreme old age she thanks God that she can still find as much pleasure in new story-books as her granddaughter finds in a new dress.

It was early apparent that Lady Mary was to be no ordinary woman, for, at a time when most girls' heads are wholly set on such things, she was of the opinion that ' fine clothes and gilt coaches, balls, operas, and public adoration were to be counted among the fatigues of existence '. In 1710, at the age of twenty-one, she made a runaway marriage (but not for love) with Edward Wortley, afterwards our ambassador in Constantinople. Lady Mary went to the East with her husband and wrote long and sprightly letters to her friends in England, among whom, until they quarrelled, was Alexander Pope.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, by Jonathan Richardson

'I know the thing that's most uncommon;
(Envy be silent, and attend!)
I know a reasonable Woman,
Handsome and witty, yet a Friend.'

Pope, Verses on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

In 1718 Lady Mary returned to England, and for many years led the life of a fashionable woman about town, although, unlike most women of that kind, she never lost her interest in things of the mind. She danced at fashionable balls ; she rode horseback in Richmond Park with the Prince of Wales ; she took a cottage at Twickenham, then a favourite resort of the great and gifted ; yet she found time to translate the classics and correspond with famous men. In 1739 she went abroad again, and after a protracted rambling settled herself at Venice. The Countess of Bute, her daughter, supplied her with English books, newspapers, and the latest scandal. And it is in her letters to the Countess of Bute that our interest lies. They treat of life, of fashionable life (a rather different affair), of the social position of women, of literature, of education. Here are two extracts from her letters, dealing with the position and education of women.

'To say truth, there is no part of the world where our sex is treated with so much contempt as in England. I do not complain of men for having engrossed the government. In excluding us from all degree of power they preserve us from many fatigues, many dangers and perhaps many crimes. But I think it the highest injustice to be debarred the entertainment of my closet, and that the same studies which raise the character of a man should hurt that of a woman. We are educated in the grossest ignorance, and no art omitted to stifle our natural reason. If some few get above their nurses' instructions, our knowledge must rest concealed and be as useless to the world as gold in the mine. I am now speaking according to our English notions, which may wear out, some ages hence, along with others equally absurd.'

Later, speaking particularly of her eldest grandchild, she says :

'Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her

Eulett inv. Sculp

Wrights
Circulating Library
Exeter Court Strand.

From Douce Portfolio 139, No. 808

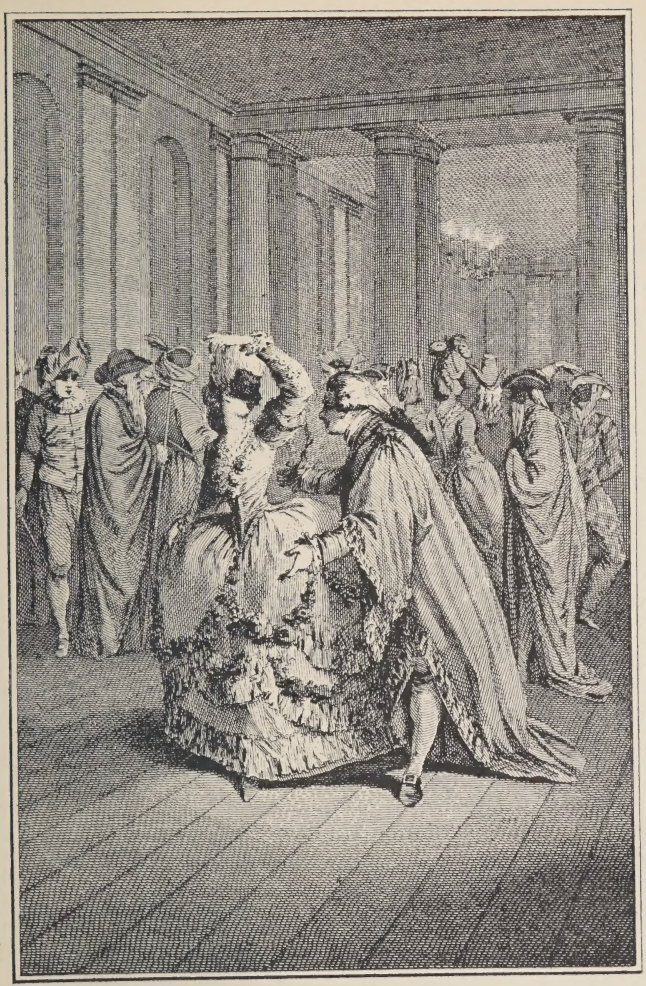
contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. To render this amusement extensive, she should be permitted to learn the languages. I would wish her no further a linguist than to enable her to read books in their originals that are often corrupted, and always injured, by translations. The second caution to be given her and which is most absolutely necessary is to conceal whatever learning she attains with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness ; the parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy and consequently the most inveterate hatred, of all he- and she-fools, which will certainly be at least three parts in four of all her acquaintance. The use of knowledge in our sex besides the amusement of solitude, is to moderate the passions, and learn to be contented with a small expense, which are the certain effects of a studious life, and it may be preferable even to that fame which men have engrossed to themselves and will not suffer us to share. . . . If she has the same inclination (I should say passion) for learning that I was born with, history, geography and philosophy will furnish her with materials to pass away cheerfully a longer life than is allotted to her.

'At the same time I recommend books, I neither exclude (needle) work nor drawing. I think it as scandalous for a woman not to know how to use a needle, as for a man not to know how to use a sword.'

Had Lady Mary lived she might have put her theories into practice herself, for in 1761, after her husband died, she came home to live with her daughter, but died herself the next year.

Samuel Richardson, the novelist, whose books made Lady Mary, in her old age, weep 'like a school girl', continued to speak and write in favour of the better education of women. Richardson put his theory of the education of women into the mouth of his heroine, Pamela. This is part of a letter which Pamela wrote to her husband,

'How I ramble ! Yet you told me, sir, that you would not



The Masquerade Scene in the Belles Stratagem

Publish'd according to Act of Parliament June 1st 1780

expect method or connexion from your girl. The education of our sex will not permit that when it is best. We are forced to struggle for knowledge, like the poor feeble infant, who, as I described in my first letter on this subject, is pinioned, legs, arms and head on the nurse's lap, and who, if its little arms happen, by great chance, to gain freedom and offer but to expand themselves, are immediately taken into custody and pinned down to passive behaviour by the tyrannical nurse. So when a poor girl in spite of her narrow education breaks into notice, her genius is immediately tamed by trifling employments and she is kept back lest she should become the envy of her own sex and be shunned by the other.

'I would, indeed, have a young lady brought up to her needle, but I would not have all her time employed in learning to mark samplers and to do those unnecessary things which she will never, probably, be called upon to practise.

'And why, my dear Mr. B., are not girls entitled to the same first education, tho' not to the same diversions as boys; so far at least as a mother can instruct them?

'Would not this lay a foundation for their future improvement, and direct their inclinations to useful subjects such as would make them above the imputations of some unkind men who allot to their parts common tea table prattle, while they do all they can to make them fit for nothing else and then upbraid them for it? And would not the men find us better and more suitable companions and assistants to them in every useful purpose of life?

'I would only beg of the gentlemen who are so free in their contempts of us that they would, for their own sakes, rather try to improve their depreciations, we should then make better daughters, better wives, better mothers and better mistresses.'

Pamela was published in 1741, Richardson died in 1761. It would seem from the following *Mock Journal of a Lady of Fashion*, that women of position were in general as empty-pated in Richardson's day as Swift and Defoe had found them. The *Journal* appeared in *The Adventurer*, of 23rd January 1753, a famous mid-eighteenth-century periodical, imitated from the *Spectator*.

ENGAGEMENTS

January.

1. Monday. To call at Deards in the morning. To dine with my husband's uncle the city merchant.

2. Tuesday. In the morning with the Miss Flareits, to drive to the Silk mercer's, &c. At night to go to the opera.

3. Wednesday. Expect Mademoiselle La Toure to try on my French head. In the evening to pay forty-three visits.

4. Thursday. My own day. At home. To have a drum major and 17 card tables.

5. Friday. To go to the auction with Lady Nicknack. To dine at home with a parcel of my husband's city relations.

6. Saturday. Monsieur le Frise all the morning to dress my head. At night (being Twelfth night) at court. To dance if I can with the handsome Bob Brilliant.

7. Sunday. If I rise soon enough St. James Church. Lady Brag's in the evening.

OCCASIONAL MEMORANDUMS

City politeness intolerable! Crammed with mince pies, and fatigued with compliments of the season; Play at Pope Joan for pence; O the creatures.

A beautiful new French Brocade at Silver tongues on Ludgate Hill. Mem. To teaze my husband to buy me a suit of it.

Mademoiselle the milliner tells me that Lady Z is in love with Captain X. Told it as a great secret at Lady Fs, the countess of Ls. Mrs. R.'s etc. etc.

Miss Sharp is a greater cheat than her mamma. Company went before five. Stupid creature Mrs. Downright.

Lady Nicknack finely taken in. The whole day a blank. Head ach. Could not dress. Went to bed horrid soon;—before one. Lay alone, my maid sat by me.

My left temple singed with the Curling iron. Sir John Dapperwit whispered me that Miss Bloom was almost as charming as myself. She must paint I am certain.

Not up till two. Bad luck at night. Never could win on Sundays. Miss Serious, who hates cards, says it is a judgement.

EXPENCES FOR THE FOREGOING WEEK.

January	£	*s.*	*d.*
1 Bought at Deards, a bauble for my little god-son	5	5	0
3 To Mm. La Toure in part of her bill . .	31	10	0
5 Bought at the auction, a china lap dog . .	4	9	0
6 Monsieur le Frise, for dressing my head . .		10	6
7 Lost at cards, at Lady Brag's	47	5	0

We have now seen sufficient evidence that eighteenth-century women stood in some need of education ; we have considered various eighteenth-century opinions on the education of women ; we have hardly spoken at all about the actual business of women's education as it did go on in our period.

It will be convenient to dispose this matter into two sections :

I. Education in the charity schools.

II. Education in the boarding-school.

In careful homes the mother (as she still does) superintended the early education of her children, and something should be said of this training before considering the work of the schools. The completest account of the home education and training which children of the middle classes received—or perhaps 'endured' is the word—is to be found in a letter written in 1732 by Mrs. Wesley, mother of the famous John Wesley. Her son quotes it in his *Journal* 'for the benefit of those who are entrusted as she was, with the care of a numerous family'. The letter, unfortunately, is too long to quote as a whole, but no chapter under this present title could pretend to completeness if Mrs. Wesley's ideas were not included.

July 24, 1732.

Dear Sir,

According to your desire, I have collected the principal rules I observed in educating my family ; which I now send you as

they occurred to my mind, and you may (if you think they can be of use to any) dispose of them in what order you please.

When turned a year old (and some before) they were taught to fear the rod, and to cry softly ; by which means they escaped abundance of correction they might otherwise have had ; and that most odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard in the house.

As soon as they were grown pretty strong, they were confined to three meals a day. At dinner their little table and chairs were set by ours, where they could be overlooked ; and they were suffered to eat and drink (small beer) as much as they would, but not to call for anything. They were never suffered to choose their own meat, but always made to eat such things as were provided for the family.

Mornings they always had spoon meat ; sometimes at night. But whatever they had, they were never permitted to eat, at those meals, of more than one thing, and of that sparingly enough. Drinking or eating between meals was never allowed, unless in case of sickness, which seldom happened. At six, as soon as family prayer was over, they had their Supper ; at seven, the maid washed them ; and, beginning at the youngest, she undressed and got them all to bed by eight : at which time she left them in their several rooms awake ; for there was no such thing allowed of in our house, as sitting by a child till it fell asleep.

They were so constantly used to eat and drink what was given them, that when any of them was ill, there was no difficulty in making them take the most unpleasant medicine ; for they durst not refuse it, though some of them would presently throw it up.

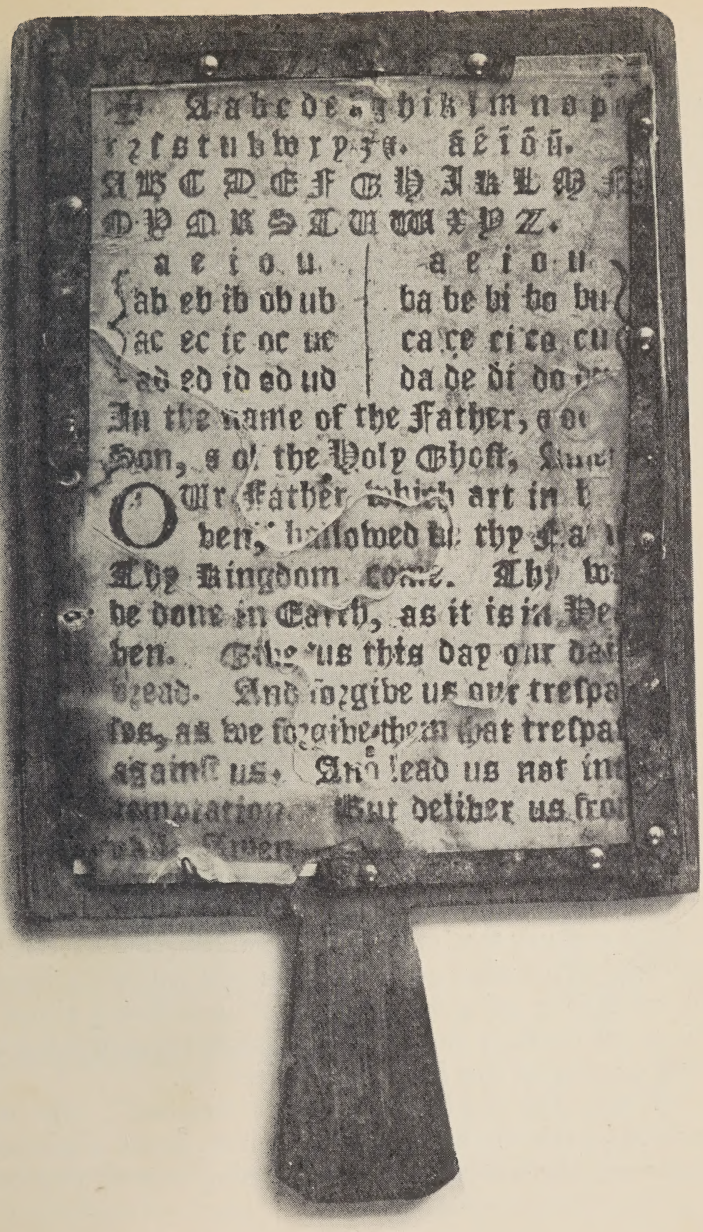
None of them were taught to read till five years old, except Kezzy in whose case I was over-ruled ; and she was more years learning, than any of the rest had been months. The way of teaching was this : One day was allowed the child wherein to learn its letters, great and small, except Molly and Nancy, who were a day and a half before they knew them perfectly : for which I thought them very dull ; but since I have observed how long many children are in learning the horn book, I have changed my opinion. But the reason why I thought them so then, was, because the rest learned so readily ; and your brother Samuel, the famous hymn writer that is, who was the first child I ever taught, learnt the alphabet in a few hours. He was five years old on the

10th of February, the next day he began to learn, and as soon as he knew the letters, began at the first chapter of Genesis. He was taught to spell the first verse, then to read it over and over, till he could read it offhand without any hesitation ; so on to the second, &c. (till he took ten verses for a lesson, which he quickly did). Easter fell low that year, and by Whitsuntide, he could read a chapter very well. The same method was observed with them all.

There was no such thing as loud talking or playing allowed of ; but every one was kept close to their business for the six hours of school. Rising out of their places, or going out of the room was not permitted except for good cause ; and running into the yard, garden, or street, without leave, was always esteemed a capital offence.

Few mothers could have been so careful, so stern, or so precise as Mrs. Wesley ; richer people were certainly more indulgent to their children ; poorer parents, while resorting to the same discipline of the rod (as Gregory the hedger in a farce of Fielding puts it, ' Give 'em a rod ! best cure in the world for crying children '), rarely showed the same concern for the welfare of their offspring both here and hereafter, as did Mrs. Wesley.

Fine young ladies who did not, for whatever reason, attend the boarding-school, had visiting masters to teach them music, dancing, and deportment ; they took lessons in sewing from the lady's maid, and in divinity from the family chaplain. Hannah More, who wrote towards the end of the century, complains that in her day the visiting tutors had swelled into an army. ' A modest young lady ' (she says) ' is first delivered into the hands of a military sergeant to instruct her in the feminine art of marching. And then transferred to a professor who is to teach her the Scotch steps. Which professor makes way for the professor of French dances, and all in their turn yield to a finishing master—each probably receiving a stipend which would make the pious curate rich and happy.'


a e i o u
a e i o u
ba be bi bo bu
ca ce ci co cu
da de di do
In the name of the Father,
Our Father
Thy Kingdom
be done in Earth, as it is in
ben.
bread.
temptation.

A Horn Book

Old Mr. Doiley, in Mrs. Cowley's popular farce, 'Who's the Dupe?' tells the same story. 'Miss Friz must have her dancing, her French, her tambour, her harpsicholl, her jography, her stronomy—whilst her father, to support all this, lives upon sprats.'

Then there were the music masters: 'The science of music is now distributed among a whole band. She requires, not a master, but an orchestra. My readers would be incredulous were I to produce real instances in which the delighted mother has been heard to declare that the visits of masters of every art followed each other in such rapid succession that her girls had not a moment's interval to look at a book.'

It will be seen that the eighteenth-century education did not altogether neglect the development of the body, although the value of such exercises as Hannah More's 'military sergeant' was master of may well be questioned. The boarding-school (as kept by Miss Pinkerton and her kind) aimed rather at cultivating becoming postures for the ball room than encouraging bodily health and a natural grace. Open-air games for girls were, of course, undreamed of. Battle-dore and shuttle-cock, recommended to Dorothy Osborne in the seventeenth century as a cure for melancholy, remained popular; and riding on the rocking-horse was thought good both for old and young. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that more rational and varied exercise was allowed to growing girls, and then not without misgiving. A mild form of gymnastics came into favour about that time, particularly the use of the swinging bar, and a lady-like parody of the Indian club exercise.

When the young lady was 'finished', she could execute a few old airs upon the spinet, dance a minuet, or later on, the waltz, and possibly sing one or two of the

Ladies working at the Tambour. From 'Recueil de Planches', Paris 1762-7

'Miss Friz must have her dancing, her French, her tambour'.
Old Doiley. In Mrs. Cowley's farce, 'Who's the Dupe?'

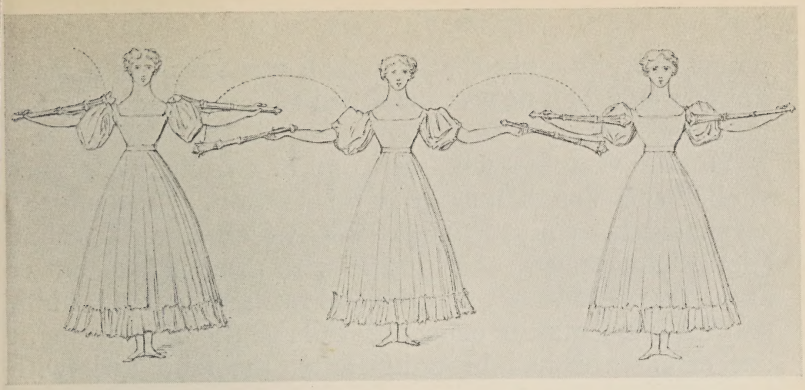
Italian songs from the foreign operas which were just now becoming fashionable in England. At sixteen or even earlier 'Miss' was introduced into the world and put away all trifling with books for the more serious business of life—routs, masquerades, balls, and husband hunting. Bath commenced her education proper, Ranelagh and Vauxhall finished it. Anstey, a popular versifier in his day, has left us, in *The New Bath Guide*, this amusing picture of the fine young ladies disporting themselves at Bath:

> O twas pretty to see them all put on their flannels
> And then take the water like so many spaniels
> And though all the while it grew hotter and hotter
> They swam just as if they were hunting an otter.
> T'was a glorious sight to see the fair sex
> All wading with gentlemen up to their necks,
> And view them so prettily tumble and sprawl
> In a great smoking kettle as big as our hall.

And this is how Vauxhall appeared to a fashionable young lady in the mid-eighteenth century.

'Imagine to yourself, my dear Letty, a spacious garden, part laid out in delightful walks, bounded with high hedges and trees, and paved with gravel; part exhibiting a wonderful assemblage of the most striking objects, pavilions, lodges, groves, grottoes, lawns, temples, and cascades; porticoes, colonnades, and rotundas; adorned with pillars, statues, and painting: the whole illuminated with an infinite number of lamps, disposed in different figures of suns, stars, and Constellations; the place crowded with the gayest company, ranging through those blissful shades, or supping in different lodges on cold collations, enlivened with mirth, freedom and good humour, and animated by an excellent band of music. Among the vocal performers, I had the happiness to hear the celebrated Mrs. —— whose voice was so loud and shrill that it made my head ache through excess of pleasure.'

It is true that Matthew Bramble, uncle to this enthusiastic



From Donald Walker's 'Exercises for Ladies', second edition, 1837

From Signor Voarino's 'Treatise on Calisthenic Exercises arranged for the private tuition of Ladies', 1827

Calisthenics for Ladies

young lady, thought that Vauxhall was very like a mad-house ; but then he was a crabbed old man, and suffering from the gout.

Horace Walpole, who was fond of a frolic, sometimes supped at a Vauxhall lodge in this fashion. ' We minced seven chickens into a china dish, which Lady Caroline (Petersham) stewed over a lamp with three pats of butter and a flagon of water, stirring and rattling, and laughing, and we every minute expecting to have the dish fly about our ears. She had brought Betty, the fruit girl, with hampers of strawberries and cherries from Roger's, and made her wait upon us, and then made her sup by us at a little table. The conversation was no less lively than the transaction.' It is hardly to be wondered at that the young Miss should adore Vauxhall and Ranelagh, or that she should grumble when, like Pope's *Martha Blount*,

> She went to plain-work and to purling brooks
> Old-fashioned halls, dull Aunts, and croaking rooks,
> She went from Op'ra, Park, Assembly, Play,
> To morning-walks, and pray'rs three hours a day.

With these lively pictures of the finishing schools of fashion, let us leave the Lady Caroline and her kind, and consider the case of poor ' Betty, the fruit girl '.

It has been said that poor girls received little or no education beyond what they managed to acquire for themselves, and this is true for the majority. But about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and even earlier, schools for the poor, known as ' charity schools ', began to be opened. They were supported and over-looked either by the great lady of the village, helped, it might be, by ' subscribers ', as they were called, whom she had been able to interest in the work, or by societies, like the Quakers, who loved their fellow men ;

The Rotunda at Ranelagh, from a drawing by George Cruikshank

'Ranelagh looks like the enchanted palace of a genius'. Miss Lydia Melford

often they were founded and endowed out of bequests left by the charitable dead. School was kept usually in the house of some respectable old dame, who for a pittance and an extra petticoat or so from the lady 'patron' at Christmas, was content to teach A, B, C, and pothooks, plain sewing, the dropping of curtseys, and such portions of the Church catechism as she herself had not forgotten.

> In every village marked with little spire,
> Embowered in trees, and hardly known to fame
> There dwells, in lowly shed, and mean attire,
> A matron old, whom we schoolmistress name ;
> Who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame ;
> They grieven sore, in piteous durance pent,
> Awed by the power of the relentless dame ;
> And oftimes on vagaries idly bent
> For unkempt hair, or task unconned are duly shent.

'It is not much they pay me, and it is not much I teach them', declared very frankly an old dame, such a one as Shenstone had in mind when he wrote the above lines. Commonly the insufficient pay was eked out in various ways. 'One of the best of the Dame schools' (writes a critic as late as 1837) 'is kept by a blind man who hears his scholars their lessons and explains them with great simplicity ; he is, however, liable to interruption in his academic labours, as his wife keeps a mangle and he is obliged to turn it for her.'

Miserable and inadequate as the charity school education was, there were not wanting those who cried out against the wicked extravagance, nay, the wanton folly, of educating poor girls above their station.

It was pointed out that it was cruel to the poor girls themselves to give them an education too refined for their surroundings—an argument not unknown, even in our

days. Thus one Harriet B. writes to the *Mirror*, a Scotch journal modelled on the *Spectator*, wishing that she had never acquired those accomplishments from which she formerly received so much pleasure.

'When I came to the country [poor Harriet is made to say] I proposed to spend part of my time in my favourite amusement of reading; but, on inquiry, I found that my father's library consisted of a large family Bible, Dickson's *Agriculture*, and a treatise on *Farriery*, and that the only books my mother was possessed of were, *The Domestic Medicine*, and *The Complete Housewife*.'

Sometimes the 'subscribers' wearied in well doing; sometimes, as happened to 'Betty Broom's' school, the patron was won over by the argument or ridicule of the enemies of education, and the school was obliged to shut its doors. Betty Broom was a poor girl, possibly drawn from life, whose story has been told by Dr. Johnson. The school is said to have been 'The Ladies' Charity School in the parish of St. Sepulchre', of which a Mrs. Gardiner, who died in 1789, was the patron. But let Betty Broom tell her own story.

'I am a poor girl. I was bred in the country at a charity school, maintained by the contributions of wealthy neighbours. The ladies, or patronesses, visited us from time to time, examined how we were taught, and saw that our clothes were clean. We lived happily enough, and were instructed to be thankful to those at whose cost we were educated. I was always the favourite of my mistress; she used to call me to read, and show my copy-book to all strangers, who never dismissed me without commendation, and very seldom without a shilling.

'At last the chief of our subscribers, having passed a winter in London, came down full of an opinion new and strange to the whole country side. She held it little less than criminal to teach poor girls to read and write. They who are born to poverty, said she, are born to ignorance, and will work the harder, the less they know. She told her friends that London was in confusion by the

insolence of servants that scarcely a wench was to be got for *all work*, since education had made such numbers of fine ladies, that nobody would now accept a lower title than that of a waiting maid or something that might qualify her to wear laced shoes and long ruffles, and to sit at work in the parlour window. But she was resolved for her part, to spoil no more girls ; those, who were to live by their hands, should neither read nor write out of her pocket ; the world was bad enough already, and she would have no part in making it worse.

'She was for a short time warmly opposed ; but she persevered in her notions, and withdrew her subscriptions. Her example and her arguments gained ground daily ; and in less than a year the whole parish was convinced that the nation would be ruined, if the children of the poor were taught to read and write. Our school was now dissolved ; my mistress kissed me when we parted, and told me, that, being old and helpless, she could not assist me, advised me to seek a service, and charged me not to forget what I had learned.

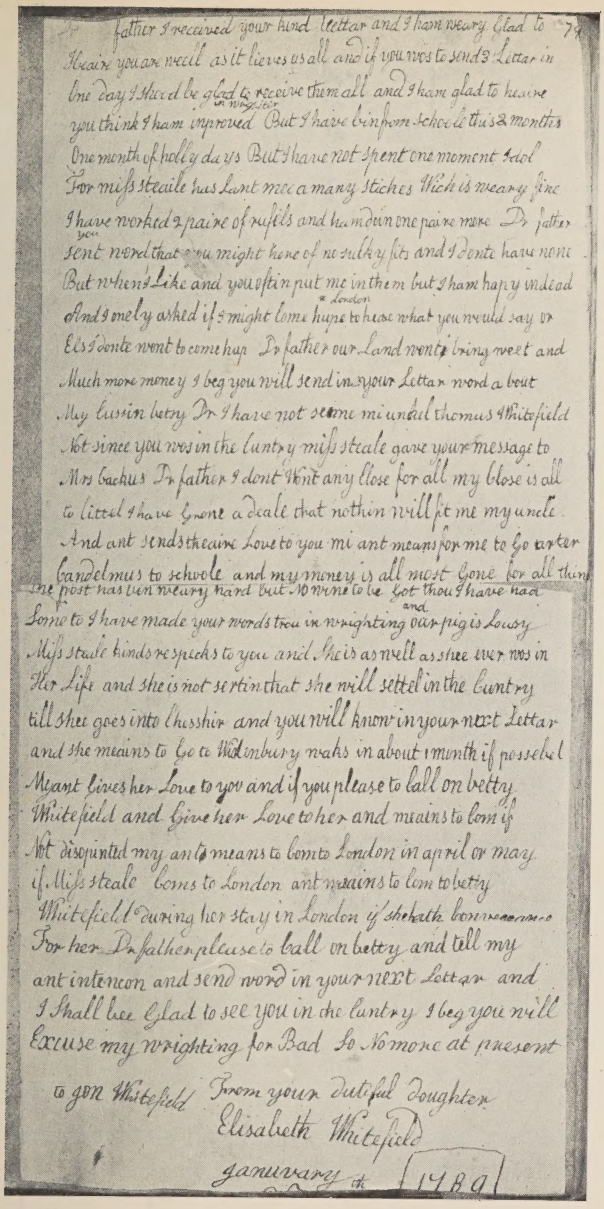
'My reputation for scholarship, which had hitherto recommended me to favour, was, by the adherents to the new opinion, considered as a crime ; and when I offered myself to my mistress, I had no other answer than "Sure child, you would not work ! hard work is not fit for a pen-woman ; a scrubbing brush would spoil your hand, child !"'

And so Betty Broom forsakes her native village and seeks a dubious fortune in London.

It will be interesting to see the sort of performance which gained for the 'Betty Brooms of the Charity School' a 'reputation for scholarship'. The letter below was written by one A. G., a servant in the family of Mr. Granville, a relative of the same Mrs. Delaney whose extraordinary cure for the ague was noticed on p. 168. She is writing to a friend in Mr. Granville's service at Calwich.

August, 1745.

Indeed, my good friend Martha, it has been a deadly while I have taken to answer your kind letter, but what can a body doe



Dr father I receaved your kind lettar and I ham weary glad to
Heaire you are well as it lieves us all and if you wos to send a Lettar in
one day I should be glad to receive them all and I ham glad to heaire
you think I ham improved But I have bin from schoole this 2 months
One month of holey days But I have not spent one moment in vain
For miss steale has lant mee a many stiches Which is meary fine
I have worked 2 paire of ruffels and ham doin one paire more Dr father
sent word that you might have of no sulky sir and I donte have none
But when's Like and you often put me in them but I ham happy indead
And I onely asked if I might come hupe to heaire what you would say or
Els I donte wont to come hup Dr father our Land wont bring weet and
Much more money I beg you will send in your Lettar word about
May Cussin betty Dr I have not seene mi uncle thomus Whitefield
Not since you wos in the cuntry miss steale gave your message to
Mrs Backus Dr father I dont Want any close for all my close is all
to Littel I have Grone a deale that nothin will fit me my uncle
And ant sends theaire Love to you mi ant means for me to go arter
Candelmus to schoole and my money is all most Gone for all thing
the post has bin meary hard but No more to be Got thou I have had
Some to I have made your words trou in wrighting our pig is Lousy
Miss steale hinds respects to you and She is as well as shee ever wos in
Her Life and she is not sertin that she will settel in the cuntry
till shee goes into Chesshir and you will know in your next Lettar
and she means to Go to Widmbury neaks in about 1 month if possebel
Mi ant lives her Love to you and if you please to call on betty
Whitefield and Give her Love to her and means to com if
Not disjointed my ant means to com to London in april or may
if Miss steale Goms to London ant means to com to betty
Whitefield during her stay in London if she hath bin reconciled
For her Dr father please to call on betty and tell my
ant intencon and send word in your next Lettar and
I Shall bee Glad to see you in the cuntry I beg you will
Excuse my wrighting for Bad So No more at present

to gon Whitefield From your dutiful Doughter
Elisabeth Whitefield
ganuvary th [1789]

A school-girl's letter to her father, written in 1789

Douce S. 9, No. 179

with one eye, and that a very bad one. Moreover, I have a pain in my shoulder on one side, and a pain in my elbow on the other : much pain and very lame of my knees and ancles ; when I walk it is like an elephant without bending a joint. I would take my oath I would rather be an otter than an old woman : but you do not know what it is to be old ! You are capering about in your fine Cardinals, and things, like a girl of twenty. I suppose you are about geting a good husband. I was told so ; and much good may it doe you, if he gives you a hearty thrashing now and then. I wish you would tell me who he is ; write me word what his name is. And what is master doing ? Has he got his work done and laid himself down upon the gazy hill to take breath a little. This furious hott weather—I never felt such in my life. Tel him, that is if he have outlived it that I have thought forty times to have come to Calwich and live in the river among the otters, and lye titely with them and try whether they or I should eat most carps, and I believe I should have come if a thought had not changed in my head, that there might come at once a hundred about me, and eate me up in stead of a perch. You know I am a little slimikin thing, not unlike a perch or an eel, both which they like, and might easily misstake and pick my bones in a moment ; so I chous to stay and be broyled at Fulham. I hope master will accept of a thousand good wishes of mine which coms to him most heartily, and I hope dear Martha will believe that

I am, her true old friend
A. G.

We have spoken of the books which the chap-book hawker sold among the poor. It will readily be understood that the ' charity schools ' enjoyed few books ; the Bible, because it was cheap and because it was ' the good book ', was used as a reading-book, and along with it certain little books for ' masters and misses ', such as those printed by Edward Newbery the bookseller, who published Betty Broom's story. Dr. Watts's verses, which showed quite clearly how pleasant and profitable it was to be a good child, were usually got by heart.

How bright does the Soul grow with Use and Business? With what proportion'd sweetness does that Family flourish, where but one Laborious Guide steers an order'd & regular Course.

Of all the Causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring Judgment & misguide the Mind,
What is't weak Head with strongest Bias rules
Is Pride, the never-failing Vice of Fools. &c

Keep no Company with a Man who is given to Detraction; to hear him Patiently, and shew a Countenance of Encouragement is to partake of his Guilt, and prompt him to a Continuance in that Vice, which all good Men should shun him for.

Eighteenth-Century Lessons in Penmanship

From Bickham's 'Universal Penman', 1741

Thanks to the good Dr. Watts the charity-school girl could acquire verses and sound advice in one dose, so to speak, as the following stanzas will show:

THE ROSE

How fair is the rose ! what a beautiful flower!
The glory of April and May ;
But the leaves are beginning to fade in an hour
And they wither and die in a day.

Yet the rose has one powerful virtue to boast
Above all the flowers of the field ;
When its leaves are all dead and its fine colours lost,
Still how sweet a perfume it will yield.

So frail is the youth and the beauty of women,
Though they bloom and look gay like the rose ;
But all our fond care to preserve them is sinning—
Time kills them as fast as he goes.

Then I'll not be proud of my youth and my beauty,
Since both of them wither and fade ;
But gain a good name by well doing my duty—
This will scent like a rose when I'm dead.

We must find space here to look at one of Mr. Edward Newbery's little books before considering the boarding-school. The title was artfully calculated to whet the reading appetite of even the most sluggish 'Miss' or 'Master'.

'The Looking-Glass for the Mind ; or Intellectual Mirror : being an elegant collection of the most delightful little stories and interesting tales.'

And if the diligent scholar took the trouble to read the Preface, haply she might discover therein how the book 'displays the Follies and improper Pursuits of the youthful Breast, points out the dangerous Paths they sometimes tread, and clears the Way to the *Temple of Honour and Fame*'. All which for 3*s*. 6*d*. (the price of

the book) must be allowed to be something of a bargain. Fortunately the stories are so short that one at least may be transcribed if only to see how plain, for good children, was the way to the *Temple of Honour and Fame*, in the eighteenth century. It is worth while noticing the 'be good, sweet maid' air which pervades the story, for this is characteristic of eighteenth-century literature for the schools, whether charity or boarding schools.

CLEOPATRA; OR, THE REFORMED LITTLE TYRANT

A pert little hussey, whose name was Cleopatra, was continually teazing and commanding her poor brother. 'So, you will not do what I bid you, Mr. Obstinacy! (she would often say to him). Come, come, Sir, obey or it shall be the worse for you.'

If Cleopatra's word might be taken for it, her brother did everything wrong; but, on the contrary, whatever she thought of doing was the masterpiece of reason and sound sense. If he proposed any kind of diversion she was sure to consider it as dull and insipid; but, it often happened, that she would herself the next day, recommend the same thing, and having forgotten what she had said of it before, consider it as the most lively and entertaining.

Her brother was obliged to submit to her little whims and fancies, or else endure the most disagreeable lectures a female tongue could utter. If ever he presumed to be so hardy as to reason with her on her strange conduct, instant destruction to his playthings were the inevitable consequences of it. Her parents with regret saw this strange and tyrannical disposition of their daughter, and in vain did everything they could think of to break her of it. Their prudent advice, however, made no impression on her stubborn heart; and her brother, wearied out by her caprice and tyranny, began to have very little affection for her.

It one day happened that a gentleman of a free and open temper dined at their house. He could not help observing with what a haughty air she treated her poor brother, and indeed, every other person in the room. At first the rules of politeness kept

him from saying anything ; but at last, tired out with her impertinence, he began addressing his discourse to her mamma, in the following manner.

'I was lately in France, and, as I was fond of being present at the soldier's exercise, I used to go, as often as I could, to see their manœuvres on the parade. Among the soldiers there were many I observed with whiskers, which gave them a very fierce and soldier-like look. Now, had I a child like your Cleopatra, I would instantly give her a soldier's uniform, and put her on a pair of whiskers, when she might very well pass for a commander.'

Cleopatra heard this, and stood covered with confusion ; she could not help blushing, and was unable to conceal her tears. However, this reproach perfectly reformed her, and she became sensible how unbecoming was a tyrannizing temper. Her reformation was a credit to her ; and it is much to be wished that all young ladies, who take no pains to conquer their passions, would at last imitate Cleopatra, and wish to avoid being told, that a soldier's dress and a pair of whiskers would become them more than nice cambric frocks and silk slips.

Later on in the century an unhappy change was to come over the school books, but of this we shall speak more particularly in writing of the boarding-school.

The *Looking Glass for the Mind* was a translation, with additions, from the French. Towards the end of our century many Frenchmen, prompted by one great man, Jean Jacques Rousseau, began to turn their thoughts towards education. We cannot, in this place, notice the work of Rousseau except perhaps to remember that he thought the *Robinson Crusoe* of that early champion of women's education, Daniel Defoe, to be a 'most excellent treatise on natural education', and Crusoe himself (till he found Friday) to be about the best man that ever lived. But Rousseau had followers in England, and experiments were made in applying his ideas to the education of English girls. One such experiment was

carried out towards the close of the eighteenth century with two charity-school girls for victims ; and it may well, since it had a happy ending, make a close to our account of the charity school, its pathetic pretence of education, and its still more pathetic scholars.

Thomas Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton*, at one time a popular book with children, was a disciple of Rousseau. Having decided to marry he resolved that his wife should be educated according to the strict letter of his master's rule. He therefore went to a charity school at Shrewsbury, and picked out a flaxen-haired orphan of twelve whom he named Sabrina Sidney ; thence he went to the Foundling Hospital in London, where he selected a second whom he called Lucretia. With Sabrina and Lucretia he journeyed to France and there set himself to discover and discipline their characters. Unfortunately he quarrelled with both girls ; next they took small-pox, and he had to nurse them night and day ; by and by he was glad to return to London and get Lucretia off his hands by apprenticing her to a milliner on Ludgate Hill. Poor Sabrina was reserved for further experiment. But she could not conquer weaknesses despised by Mr. Day. When Day dropped melted sealing-wax on her arms she flinched ; when he fired pistols at her garments she started and screamed. When he tried her fidelity by telling her pretended secrets, she divulged them to the servants. Finally she exhausted his patience and outraged his principles by wearing thin sleeves for ornament. He packed her off to an ordinary boarding-school, kept her there for three years, allowed her £50 a year, and gave her £500 on her marriage to a barrister. Even more curious and amusing is the accounts which Mrs. Gaskell gives in her *Life of Charlotte Brontë* of a girl who was adopted by a wealthy couple and

trained on French educational principles. This girl and a favourite dog were taken for an airing in the carriage on alternate days; the creature—girl or dog—whose turn it was to be left behind was tossed in a blanket by the servants with the object of hardening the nerves.

Maria Edgeworth, the famous novelist, and famous too in her day as a writer of school-books for girls, was astonished and indignant that Rousseau should profess so much interest in education, and at the same time abandon his own children to the tender mercies of the Foundling Hospital in Paris.

There remains to be spoken of the sort of school to which Sabrina Sidney was sent, the eighteenth-century boarding-school. Boarding-schools for young ladies begin to be advertised in the newspapers and journals of the early eighteenth century, although they were in being much earlier. The following advertisement is taken from the *Spectator* of 2nd April 1711 :

'Near the Windmill in Hampstead is a good Boarding School ; where young Gentlewomen may be boarded and taught English, French, Dancing, Musick, and all sorts of Needlework.

Anthony Fert's advertisement, whose book on dancing is included in Leonora's library, may also be quoted.

'Anth: Fert, Dancing Master, who has the most easie Manner of teaching Ladies and Gentlemen and has lately composed a new Dance is willing to teach at private Houses, at one Guinea per Month, or in Boarding Schools at reasonable Rates.'

The boarding-schools were private ventures for profit, the governesses either decayed gentlewomen or poor relatives of the clergy, or even the retired servants of the rich. Frequently a sharp but poor pupil was glad enough to get her fees remitted in return for helping with the business of teaching, a fate which Becky Sharp suffered in *Vanity Fair*. The schools were not overlooked except by

curious and critical neighbours, and the only people who could vouch for the quality of the work done in them were the parents, who were very often too lazy and ignorant to make the necessary inquiries. Moreover, the boarding-school became, as time went on, a kind of polite prison whither the anxious parent might send his daughters out of harm's way, and to be safe from the presumption of ineligible lovers. Often the hoped-for safety was quite illusory and the parent was faced with the unpleasant business of a runaway marriage. Indeed, not a few parents preferred to educate their girls at home solely because of the risks, real and imaginary, which were part and parcel of a boarding-school upbringing. Thus Miss Hoyden, in Sheridan's comedy, *A Trip to Scarborough*, 'to prevent all misfortunes has her breeding within doors: the parson of the parish teaches her to play upon the dulcimer, the clerk to sing, the nurse to dress, and her father to dance'.

With such teachers and such aims, the boarding-schools could hardly be other than incompetent. Nor did they improve with keeping. Dr. Johnson, writing in 1761 of a boarding-school pupil, says that 'she passed her time, like other young ladies, in needlework, with a few intervals of dancing and reading', quite evidently one of those 'wretched, *unidead* girls' spoken of by the doctor in another place. He forgets, however, the careful penmanship, 'so small and so neat', and so painstakingly taught; forgets, too, the ladylike behaviour, or 'deportment', as it was called, which was thought to distinguish the boarding-school miss above her poorer sister in the charity schools. 'Deportment' was taught by precept, and caught by example. For precept the young pupil was set to read some such collection of polite letters as Mrs. Chapone's on the *Improvement of the Mind* or the *Legacy for Young Ladies*.

Mrs. Chapone is perhaps better remembered as Hester Mulso, the friend and correspondent of Richardson, and one of the few women who wrote for Dr. Johnson's paper, *The Rambler*. She was one of those, says the writer of her life, 'who devoted those years to the fortification of their opinions, that might more eligibly be employed in the rectification of their disposition', which may be taken to mean that she was more learned than lovable. Her letters on the *Improvement of the Mind* deal with The First Principles of Religion, The Study of the Holy Scriptures, The Regulation of the Heart and Affections, The Government of the Temper, Politeness and Accomplishments, and other equally surprising subjects for a lady's correspondence. It became a standard book in the late eighteenth-century boarding-school, but so far from constituting 'a legacy for the generations to come', as Mrs. Chapone's biographer ventured to prophecy, the book is now neglected and forgotten.

The *Legacy for Young Ladies* was the work of the governess of a fashionable boarding-school in Leicester, and although it was not published till a quarter of a century after Mrs. Chapone's death (1827), follows closely the work of that lamented lady. The headings of some few letters in the *Legacy* will show how the young pupil was still being preached at and persuaded into good behaviour.

Causes of Happiness and Misery—Temper—Contentment.
Health—Cheerfulness.
Temper—Agreeableness—Truth and Falsehood.
Scandal—Tale-Bearing—Gossiping—Charity—Forbearance.
Manners and Behaviour—Duties to Parents and Relations—Duties to Governesses, Teachers, and Masters.

So much for precept: and for a ladylike example what better could be found than that set daily before the

The Boarding-School Miss. Stolen Love-making

From an aquatint of about 1810

The Writing Lesson

From 'The Cowslip', 1811

pupils' eyes in the person of the mistress of the 'seminary' herself, who more than made up in manner what she lacked in accomplishment. Yet with all these advantages it would appear that the young pupils when they returned home were pert, and ill natured. Hannah More tells how a certain Mrs. Bragwell, the wife of a Somersetshire farmer, 'sent her daughters to a boarding-school where she instructed them to keep company with the richest and most fashionable girls in the school, and to make no acquaintance with farmers' daughters.

'They came home at the usual age of leaving school, with a large portion of vanity grafted on their native ignorance. Of religion they could not possibly learn anything, for at that place Christianity was considered as a part of education which belonged only to charity schools. Of knowledge the Miss B's had got just enough to laugh at their parents' rustic manners and vulgar language, and just enough taste to despise and ridicule every girl who was not as vainly dressed as themselves.

'Their father hoped that they would be a comfort to him both in sickness and in health. When they came home however they neither soothed him by their kindness when he was sick nor helped him by their industry when he was busy. They fancied that nursing was a coarse and servile employment, and as to their skill in ciphering, he soon found, to his cost, that though they knew how to spend both pounds, shillings and pence, they did not know so well how to cast them up. When the mother found her girls too polite to be of any use she would take comfort in observing how her parlour was set out with their filagree and flowers, their embroidery and cut paper. They spent the morning in bed, the noon in dressing, the evening at the harpsichord, and the night in reading novels.'

Later on in the story, Farmer Bragwell, paying a visit to Farmer Worthy, is describing his daughters and discussing their education. He says :

'Though ours is such a lonely village, it is wonderful to see how soon they get the fashions. I used to take in the *County*

BEG leave respectfully to invite,
NOBLES and GENTS and all who write;
Their various Sorts of PENS to buy,
Which are in estimation high,
Approved both by KING and QUEEN,
PRINCESSES too, their worth have seen;
And subjects them, superior own,
In TOWN or COUNTRY ever known;
Which to both INDIES have been sent,
And also to the CONTINENT.

We have of every price and sort,
Fit for the Cottage or the Court;
But chiefly to each generous Friend,
The PORTABLE we recommend.
These so convenient and complete,
We put in Boxes small and neat;
So small their compass, that their number,
Will not the gayest Dame encumber;
And Writing Boxes we produce full,
With all that is for Writing useful;
Such in the Cabin, or the Tent,
Have often their assistance lent;
They please the Excise*man*, or Attorney,
And aid the Traveller in his journey.

PALMER and his SONS produce,
PENS made fit for every use;
Suited to the different hands,
Used in this, and other Lands;
Whether busy housewives count,
How far expences do amount;
Or young LADIES fill the Sheet,
With vows and protestations sweet;
Or write the invitation Card,
Pens may have both soft and hard;
Sailors, Soldiers, Priests, Physicians,
Tradesmen, too of all conditions;
For business, pleasure, news, or letter,
None we trust can serve you better;
Nor with more gratitude receive,
Each kind ORDER you may GIVE.

But still of Counterfeits beware,
'Tis known around that some there are;
Then if to Us, or Agents send,
The right you'l get, and hope commend.

Rhyming Advertisement of Palmer's Pens. About 1800

W. C. SMITH
Teaches an Elegant Running Hand in Three Lessons.

A specimen of writing previous to instruction.—

A specimen of writing after three lessons.

Numerous other specimens may be seen betwixt the hours of eleven and one, and three and four, at No. 117, Duke-street.

Pen-making taught in One Lesson.

Mrs. SMITH continues to give lessons to those Ladies who prefer female tuition.

From the 'Liverpool Mercury', May 16, 1817

Journal because it was useful enough to see how oats went, the time of high water, and the price of stocks. But when my ladies came home I was soon wheedled out of that, and forced to take a London paper, that tells a deal about caps and feathers, and all the trumpery of the quality. When I want to know what hops are a bag, they are snatching the paper to see what violet soap is a pound. And as to the dairy, they never care how cow's milk goes, as long as they can get some stuff which they call milk of roses. Seeing them disputing violently the other day about cream and butter, I thought it a sign they were beginning to care for the farm, till I found it was cold cream for the hands, and jessamine butter for the hair.

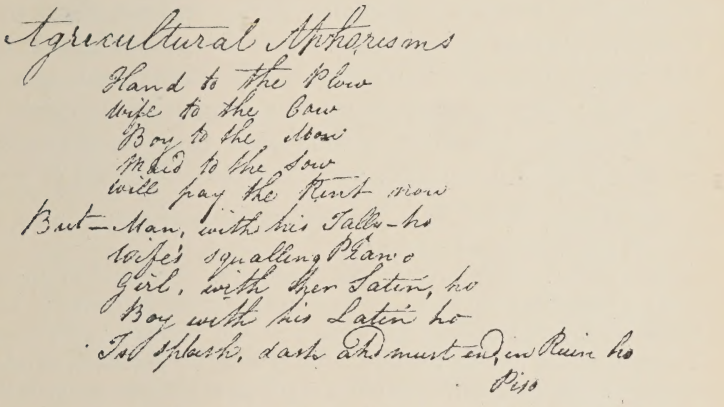
'Our Jack, the ploughboy, spends half his time in going to a shop in our market town where they let out books to read. And they sell paper with all manner of colours on the edges, and gimcracks, and powder puffs, and washballs and cards without any pips, and everything in the world that 's genteel and of no use.'

The Bragwell girls are always with us, and it is hardly fair to blame the boarding-school or indeed any other school for being unable to make silk purses out of sows' ears. One ought to add to Hannah More's account the testimony, or rather the reminiscence, of so close an observer as Miss Mitford. She went in 1798 to Mrs. Latournelle's school in Hans Place, London, a school which deserves to be remembered if only because Jane Austen was an old girl.

'It was kept', says Miss Mitford, 'by M. St. Quintin, a well-born, well educated, and well-looking French emigrant, who was assisted, or rather chaperoned, in his undertaking by his wife, a good-natured, red-faced Frenchwoman, much muffled up in shawls and laces ; and by Miss Rowden, an accomplished young lady, the daughter and sister of clergymen, who had been for some years governess in the family of Lord Bessborough. M. St. Quintin himself taught the pupils French, history, geography, and as much science as he was master of, or as he thought it requisite for a young lady to know ; Miss Rowden, with the assistance of finishing masters for Italian, music and dancing, and drawing, superintended

the general course of study : while Madam St. Quintin sat dozing, either in the drawing room, with a piece of work, or in the library with a book in her hand, to receive the friends of the young ladies, or any other visitors who might call.'

Miss Mitford adds that the school was 'excellent', the pupils 'healthy, happy, well fed, and kindly treated and that the intelligent manner in which the instruction was


Agricultural Aphorisms
Hand to the Plow
Wife to the Cow
Boy to the Mow
Maid to the Sow
will pay the Rent now
But—Man, with his Talks-ho
Horse's signalling Haw
Girl, with her Satin, ho
Boy with his Latin ho
Tol lol splash, dash Ah! must end in Ruin ho
Pish

Extract from a Commonplace Book of the early nineteenth century

given had the effect of producing in the majority of the pupils a love of reading and a taste for literature'.

It will be seen in comparing the subjects taught in Mrs. Latournelle's school with the *Spectator's* advertisement of date a hundred years earlier that the polite accomplishments of the early boarding-schools had begun to be stiffened with a little more solid learning. The good Dr. Watts it was, who first showed the way.

'Furnish yourself', he writes, 'with a rich variety of ideas. Acquaint yourselves with things ancient and modern ; things natural, civil, and religious ; things of your native land, and of foreign countries ; things domestic and national ; things present,

past, and future ; and above all, be well acquainted with God and with yourselves ; with animal nature, and the working of your own spirits. Such a general acquaintance with things will be of very great advantage.'

By Jane Austen's time the great empire of 'Things' was fully discovered to the schools ; and the emperor thereof was one Thomas Gradgrind, whose chief servant was called Bitzer. As for his works, are they not written in the book of Charles Dickens ? But the change did not come to pass without certain misgivings. Let Mrs. Malaprop speak for those parents who positively distrusted the new learning. She is discussing the education of girls with Sir Anthony Absolute, whose view may be summed up in Mr. Punch's famous monosyllable—'don't !'

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation now, what would you have a woman know ?

Mrs. Mal. Observe me, Sir Anthony. I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning ; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman ; for instance, I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning—neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments.—But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts ; and as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries ;—but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mis-spel, and mis-pronounce words shamefully as girls usually do ; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know.

Great is Mrs. Malaprop, but a greater was to come after her, by name Miss Pinkerton, and to prevail. Under Miss Pinkerton and her kind, the boarding-school cheerfully

LIST of PERFUMERY and other ARTICLES,

SOLD BY

BAYLEY, SON AND BLEW,

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The true Perſian and Italian Otto of Roſes, Caſkets of Eſſences and Sweet Waters for the Toilet.

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Ambergriſe
Pot Pourri
Muſk
Sanders
Chypres
Lavender
Roſe
Paſtils to burn

Lavender and Bergamot Fruits

Perfume for Pocket Books.

PERFUMED ARTICLES.

Garters
Night Ribbons
Watch Cuſhions
Pincuſhions
Sweet Bags
Card Baſkets

Great Choice of elegant Netting Caſes, Work Boxes, Baſkets and Bags

Sattin Pocket Books, Letter Caſes, and Huſwifes, plain and richly ornamented with Gold, Silver and Steel

ESSENCES AND OILS.

Orange Flower
Jaſmin
Tubereuſe
Jonquille
Oeillet
Violet
Roſe
Lavender
Lemon
Bergamot
Bouquet
Marechalle
Milleſleurs
Muſk
Ambergriſe
Amber
Cedra
Oil of Sanders
—— Rhodium
—— Almonds

WATERS.

Double diſtilled Lavender
Do. prepared with Amber
Do. do. with Eſſences
Honey
Hungary
Jaſmin
Tubereuſe
Jonquille
Violet
Roſe
Bergamot
Bouquet
Miel
Vanille
Marechalle
Milleſleurs
Sans Pareille
Suave
Chypres
Cithere
Favorite
Cologne
Carmes

WATERS SIMPLE.

Roſe, Elder and Orange Flower

SOAPS.

Windſor, double ſcented
Purified Italian
Net Curd
Palm
Alicant
Caſtile
Liquid

FOR SHAVING.

Naples | Powder

Brunſwick Liquid

Improved Cakes for Boxes.

WASH BALLS.

Coventry
Amber
Bergamot
Chemical
Caſtile
Almond
Marble
Lavender
Camphire
Grecian
White Cream
Marble Cream

Savonnettes aux Herbes

Waſh Ball and Soap Boxes.

POMATUMS.

Roſe
Orange Flower
Jaſmin
Tubereuſe
Jonquille
Bouquet
Marechalle
Milleſleurs
Pot Pourri
Lemon
Bergamot
Cowſlip

Jamaica (Marrow)

POWDERS.

Plain
Fine Plain
Superfine Plain
Auburn Brown
French Brown
Pink
Grey
Yellow
Orris

POWDERS PERFUMED.

Orange Flower
Jaſmin
Tubereuſe
Jonquille
Oeillet
Violet
Roſe
Lavender
Bergamot
Bouquet
Marechalle
Milleſleurs
Muſk
Orris
Chypres
Cyprus
à la Reine
Flaxen
Auburn Brown
French Brown

FOR THE TEETH.

Hemet's Eſſence of Pearl, and Pearl Dentifrice

Deleſcot's Opiate
Greenough's Tinctures
Bayley's Powder
Ruſpini's Powder
Spence's Powder
Tincture of Myrrh
Dragon Roots
Bruſhes and Sponges
Ivory and Pearl Handle Inſtruments
Complete Sets of Do. in Caſes
Great Choice of Gold, Silver, Ivory, Tortoiſeſhell, and other Toothpick Caſes, plain and richly ornamented
Gold, Silver, Tortoiſeſhell, Ivory, Liſbon and Quill Toothpicks

FOR THE HAIR.

Oil of Jaſmin
Bear's Greaſe
Water to darken the Hair
Silk Cuſhions
Dreſs Bags and Roſets
Net Caps, Silk, Cotton and Thread
Sliders, Pins and Rollers
Curling Paper
Ribbon
Sciſſars
Curling and Pinching Irons
Leather Powder Bags
Powder Boxes
—— Puffs
—— Engines
—— Knives
Powdering Maſks
Tortoiſeſhell, Horn, Ivory and Box Combs
Comb and Hair Bruſhes

Their new-invented

VEGETABLE LIQUID ROUGE.

French Rouge
Carmine
China Wool
Pearl Powder
—— Water
Face Powder
—— Paper
Cold Cream
Milk of Roſes
Bloom Water
Almond Powder
—— Paſte
Italian Lily Paſte
Lip Salve
Court Plaiſter
Patches

L'Eau de Ninon to clear the Skin.

VARIOUS.

Syrup of Capillaire
Silver, Ivory, & Tortoiſeſhell Tongue Scrapers
French, Bath, Kerſeymere and other Garters
Leather Purſes
Dutch Sealing Wax
Black-lead Pencils
India Glue
Cement to join torn Papers
Razors and Razor Strops of the beſt Makers,
Shaving Bruſhes, with Silver, Ivory, and Bone Handles
Habit Do. with and without Caſes
Cloaths, Bonnet, and Trimming Do.
Nail and Buckle Ditto
Prepared Hartthorn to clean Jewels, and prepared Bruſhes
Plate Powder
Patent Blacking Cakes and Bruſhes
Eſſential Salt of Lemons for taking out Ink Spots, Iron Moulds, &c.
Andrews's Patent Powder for cleaning Woollen Cloth, &c.
French Chalk
Scowering Drops

MEDICINES.

Greenough's Tolu Lozenges
———— Anti Acid Do.
———— Stomach Do.
———— Specific Do.
———— Volatile Salt of Vinegar
———— Iſſue Plaiſters
———— Orange Peas
———— Magneſia Alba
Blois Lozenges
Horehound Do.
Irwin's Fruit Do.
Magneſia Do.
Clarke's Heartburn Do.
Acidulated Balſamic Paſtils
Refined Liquorice
Hill's Balſam of Honey
Dalby's Carminative
Eſſence of Colt's Foot
———— Pennyroyal
———— Peppermint
Freake's *Powder and Tincture of Bark*
Glaſs's Magneſia
Henry's Calcined Do.
Dr. James's Powders
———— Analeptic Pills
Dr. Hooper's Pills
Engliſh's Scot's Do.
Spediman's Stomach Do.
Dr. Steer's Opodeldoc
———— Camomile Drops
Peppermint Do
Dr. Dickinſon's Do.
Dr. Bateman's Do.
Dr. Norris's Do.
Spillbury's Antiſcorbutic Do.
Taſtleſs Ague and Fever Do.
Specific Do. to cure Deafneſs
Daffy's Elixer
Stoughton's Do.
Baum de Vie
Fryar's Balſam
Turlington's Do.
Godfrey's Cordial
Cornwell's Oriental Vegetable Do.
Velno's Vegetable Syrup, by Swainſon
Arquebuſade Water
Samaritan Do.
Pomade Divine
Ormſkirk Medicine
Engliſh Coffee
Dr. Solander's Sanative Engliſh Tea
Godfrey's Smelling Salts
Blown in Salts
Volatile Spirit of Lavender
Compound Do.
Spirit of Hartthorn
———— Salvolatile
———— Benjamin
Vinegar of Four Thieves
Cephalic Snuff
Herb Do.
Do. Tobacco
Kennedy's Corn Plaiſter
Pyrmont Tablets and Linement

An advertisement of about 1800

undertook all knowledge for its province. Thus in the class book already referred to, the *Legacy for Young Ladies*, instruction is provided in Anatomy, Zoology, Meteorology, Moral Philosophy, Arithmetic, Poetry and the Dramas, Geography, History, Ancient History, Political Economy, and Scripture Knowledge. This mass of knowledge lies very compactly in some three hundred pages and is designed, says the learned author, 'to provide a pleasing Text Book for the perusal of young females during a course of liberal education'. And 'pleasing' it must have been in comparison with a barbarous compilation (of date 1817) calling itself by the harmless title of *The Class Book*, and containing '365 lessons for schools (one for each day in the year) combining information on every subject combined with elegance of diction, every lesson teaching some principle of science or morality or some important branch of general knowledge, purposely compiled for children of the earliest years'.

One very popular method of presenting information to the pupil was by way of question and answer. One wonders what the 'young female' nowadays would say if faced with something like this

Ques. Name some of the most Ancient Kingdoms.

Ans. Chaldea, Babylonia, Assyria, China in Asia, and Egypt in Africa. Nimrod the grandson of Harn, is supposed to have founded the first of these B. C. 2221, as well as the famous cities of Babylon, and Nineveh; his kingdom being within the fertile plains of Chaldea, Chalonitis, and Assynei was of small extent compared with the vast empires that afterwards rose from it, but included several large cities. In the district called Babylonia were the cities of Babylon, Barsita, Idicarra, and Vologsia, etc. etc.

This is from *Mangnall's Questions*, a standard text-book in early nineteenth-century schools. It now encumbers the shelves of the second-hand book-shops, and it must

be admitted that the modern school book does contrive to put a little more sugar on the pill of learning than is found in Mangnall.

Yet in those days unfortunate children who had not mastered their Mangnall were likely to have very unpleasant things said about them. Poor Fanny Price, perhaps the most charming of Jane Austen's heroines, must often (that is allowing her to be capable of an unkind thought) have wished ill to the tribe of Mangnall.

'But aunt', said her fine cousin, Miss Julia Bertram, 'she really is so very ignorant! She thinks of nothing but the Isle of Wight, and she calls it *the Island*, as if there were no other island in the world. I cannot remember the time when I did not know a great deal of that she has not the least notion of yet. How long ago it is, aunt, since we used to repeat the chronological order of the kings of England, with the dates of their accession, and most of the principal events of their reigns!'

'Yes', added the other, 'and of the Roman emperors as low as Severus; besides a great deal of the heathen mythology, and all the metals, semi-metals, planets and distinguished philosophers.'

'Very true, indeed, my dears', replies Aunt Norris, 'but you are blessed with wonderful memories.'

And the astonishing thing is, that it really was very true.

'Bitzer', said Thomas Gradgrind, 'your definition of a horse.'

'Quadruped, Gramnivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries sheds hoofs too. Age known by marks in mouth.'

Thus (and much more) from Bitzer. But it will, I imagine, be quite enough for us.

Yet another curious feature of the old boarding-school books was the quite unnatural curiosity which seems to have prompted children to ask for information on every conceivable thing at any and every opportunity. Thus

in *The Parent's Cabinet*, a popular school book of the early nineteenth century, 'dear Aunt Lucy' is so ill advised as to pay a visit to her nephews and is rewarded by being severely cross-examined by Sidney aided by Charles and abetted by Alfred, on the habits of snakes, wild fowl, tortoises, Laplanders, and linnets. But something of the sort still persists in the more stupid sort of school books, in which the absurdly inquisitive child still continues to pester his unfortunate relatives. Of course the schoolmistress, being but mortal, only pretended to all this knowledge just as the model child only pretended to a consuming thirst for the truth. The observant noticed this little weakness, and one ungrateful writer actually ventured on the opinion that even the schoolmistress might be betrayed into inexactitude. 'Schoolmistresses' letters are to be trusted no more than churchyard epitaphs', says the creator of that famous 'academy for young ladies' kept by Miss Pinkerton in Chiswick Mall. And so that you may judge for yourselves whether Thackeray was in the right or no, here is such a letter as was commonly written by the kind 'preceptor' to the 'fond parents' when the 'young offspring' left the 'seminary' for the last time.

The Mall, Chiswick.
June 15, 18—.

Madam,

After her six years residence at the Mall, I have the honour and happiness of presenting Miss Amelia Sedley to her parents, as a young lady not unworthy to occupy a fitting position in their polished and refined circle. Those virtues which characterize the young English gentlewoman, those accomplishments which become her birth and station, will not be found wanting in the amiable Miss Sedley whose *industry* and *obedience* have endeared her to her instructors, and whose delightful sweetness of temper has charmed her aged and her youthful companions.

In music, in dancing, in orthography, in every variety of embroidery and needlework, she will be found to have realized her friends *fondest wishes*. In geography there is still much to be desired ; and a careful and undeviating use of the backboard, for four hours daily during the next three years, is recommended as necessary to the acquirement of that dignified *deportment* and *carriage*, so requisite for every young lady of *fashion*.

In the principles of religion and morality, Miss Sedley will be found worthy of an establishment which has been honoured by the presence of *The Great Lexicographer* and the patronage of the admirable Mrs. Chapone. In leaving the Mall, Miss Amelia carries with her the hearts of her companions, and the affectionate regards of her mistress, who has the honour to subscribe herself

Madam, your most obliged servant
BARBARA PINKERTON.

When people began to laugh at the Boarding-Schools (as conceived by Miss Pinkerton) their day was over. But the end was not yet. It was left for the nineteenth century to see the dream of Tennyson's *Princess* come true:

> O, I wish
> That I were some great princess, I would build
> Far off from men a college like a man's,
> And I would teach them all that men are taught ;
> We are twice as quick !

VI

AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NOVELIST AND HER BLUE-STOCKING FRIENDS

In the year 1752, just a century after Dorothy Osborne wrote her first letter to William Temple, there was born at King's Lynn, a country town in Norfolk, a girl named Frances Burney. Her father, Dr. Charles Burney, was a well-known organist and teacher of music. Until 1750 he had been organist of a London church. But in that year his health gave way, and he was advised by the doctors to take a country post instead. So he became organist of St. Margaret's Church at King's Lynn, or Lynn Regis, as it was then called. His spare time was spent partly in writing a history of music, partly in teaching music at the country houses round about. He was a man of courteous manners and much charm, always very popular with his neighbours.

So Fanny's early childhood was spent at King's Lynn

and she often, in later life, revisited it. But in 1760, when Fanny was eight years old, Dr. Burney's health was restored and the family moved back to London. The next year Fanny's mother died, and Dr. Burney was stricken with grief. Fanny's elder sister Hetty and her younger

FANNY BURNEY

From a Painting by her brother Edward

'I hope he [Sir Joshua Reynolds] will take your picture; who knows but the time may come when your image may appear.'
Samuel Crisp in a letter to Fanny Burney, 1778

sister Susan were sent to a boarding-school in Paris, but Fanny herself was kept at home as company for her father.

Fanny, like Lady Mary Montagu, had little regular education. Many of her days were spent reading in her father's library, while he was teaching, or writing. In the evenings she would meet the crowds of brilliant and talented friends who gathered at Dr. Burney's house.

Sir Joshua Reynolds the painter, David Garrick the actor, Dr. Johnson, famous singers and musicians, and many peers, all came to the house, and Fanny talked to them and learnt from them.

In 1766 Dr. Burney married again. Fanny's new stepmother, herself a widow, was domestically inclined, and seems to have thought that Fanny was becoming too bookish and to have insisted on her learning sewing and other household arts.

Fanny was fond of writing, and in 1768, when she was sixteen years old, she began to keep a diary. This she addressed 'to a certain Miss Nobody', because, as she says in her introduction, 'to Nobody can I be wholly unreserved, to Nobody can I reveal every thought, every wish of my heart, with the most unlimited confidence, the most unremitting sincerity to the end of my life!' She continued it for ten years, and to it we owe nearly everything we know about her. The first few pages were written while she was paying a visit to her former home—the organist's house in St. Margaret's Churchyard. The following extracts will show what life at King's Lynn was like, and will also tell us something of Fanny's character:

'I am now writing in the pleasantest place belonging to this house. It is called sometimes the "Look Out" as ships are observed from hence, and at other times the Cabin. It is at the end of a long garden that runs along the house.

'I always spend the evening, sometimes all the afternoon, in this sweet cabin, except sometimes, when unusually thoughtful, I prefer the garden. I cannot express the pleasure I have in writing down my thoughts, at the very moment—my opinion of people when I first see them, and how I alter or confirm myself in them. There is something to me very unsatisfactory in passing year after year without even a memorandum of what you did. And then, all the happy hours I spend with particular friends and favourites would fade from my recollection.'

'The Bank's stole!—were you not my Lady! but I'll run to How Street & fetch the Saddle upon the right Horse, my Lady!
'The Bank stole, my Lord?—why I never!—this comes of admitting strangers into the house!—Ah the Cheats! Sarah, Sarah! some smack without a single Ace of the Cards!
Pray Polly, don't I look like a Duchess?
Come, I'll take a Box with you!
Now Sir, I'll trouble you for my Lady's Diamond Necklace!

The Loss of the FARO BANK; *or* The Rook's Pigeon'd.—*"When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war."*

MODERN HOSPITALITY, *or* A Friendly Party in High Life.—*To thee, earthly Divinities, she charms so soon as, the Heavenly matter of touching mortifying Ou'woman, Woman! everlasting is your power over us, for on youth, you charm away our Hearts, and on your after years you charm away our Purses.*

The Passion for Gaming, and its Consequences. Cartoons of 1792 and 1797 by Gillray

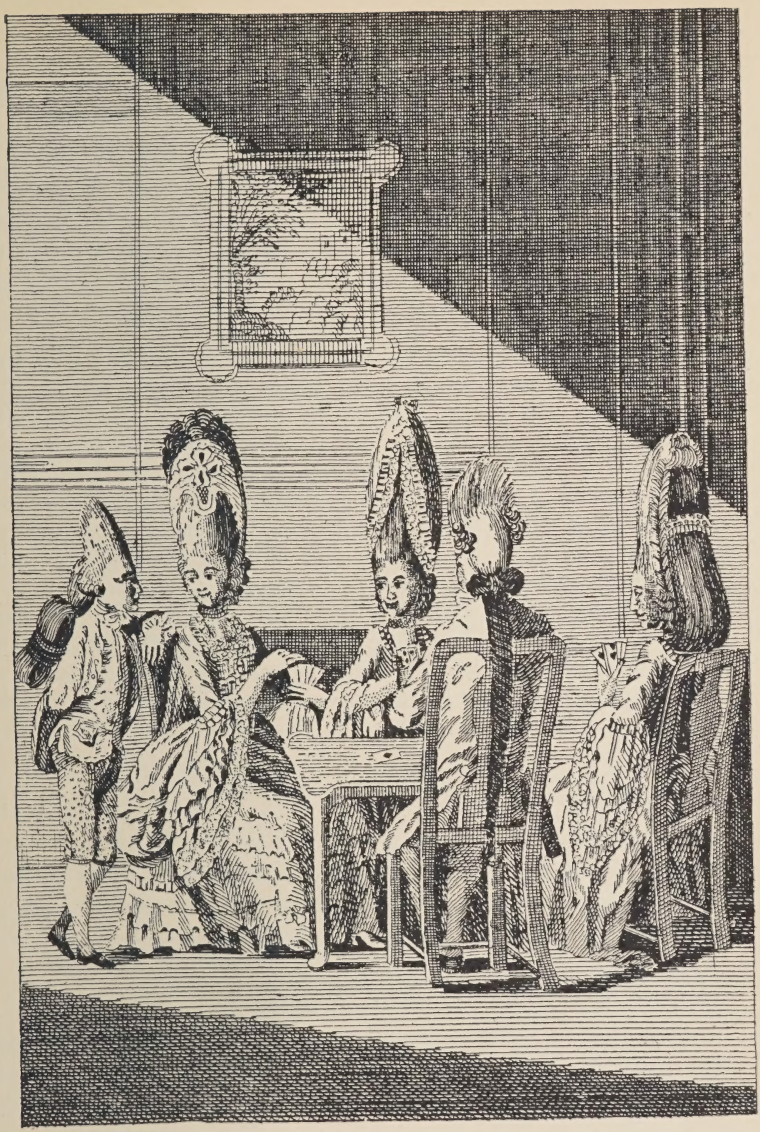
'The Love of cards let Sloth infuse
The Love of Money soon ensues
Till the wan maid, whose early bloom
The vigils of quadrille consume. . . .'
'The Female Drum', by Dr. Harvey

July 17. 'Such a set of tittle tattle, prittle prattle visitants! Oh dear, I am so sick of the ceremony and fuss of these fall lall people! So much dressing—chitchat—complimentary nonsense. In short—a country town is my detestation—all the conversation is scandal, all the attention, dress, and almost all the heart folly, envy and censoriousness. A city or a village are the only places which, I think, can be comfortable, for a country town, I think, has all the bad qualities, without one of the good ones, of both.

'We live here, generally speaking, in a very regular way—we breakfast always at 10 and rise as much before as we please—we dine precisely at two, drink tea about six, and sup exactly at nine. I make a kind of rule never to indulge myself in my two *most* favourite pursuits, reading and writing, in the morning—no, like a very good girl I give that up wholly, accidental occasions and preventions excepted, to needlework, by which means my reading and writing in the afternoon is a pleasure I cannot be blamed for by my mother, as it does not take up the time I ought to spend otherwise.'

Fanny's fondness for reading and writing is perhaps explained by the fact that her own mother was one of the only three women in King's Lynn who could read—or at least who enjoyed reading, and her stepmother (of whom Fanny is speaking here) was one of the remaining two! But her stepmother did not approve of 'scribbling' for girls; such a habit she (in common with many other people of that time) considered unladylike and improper. So Fanny kept her diary secret, and before she began it, burnt, with tears, all her childish writings, including a novel.

Next to reading and writing Fanny's great pleasure was in conversation. She always said and thought that interesting talk was more enjoyable than either a ball or a card party, and just as enjoyable as a visit to the play or to the theatre. All members of the Burney family were good talkers. Visitors often told Fanny and her sisters how different they were in this respect from the 'empty-



The Macaroni Card Players

headed' young women of the period. Once, for example, when Fanny was sixteen and Mr. Seaton (who afterwards married her elder sister Hetty) came to the house and found Hetty out, Fanny entertained him for three hours, and recorded the conversation in her diary. Mr. Seaton (who was Scottish) gave the following as his opinion of the Englishwomen of the period. It is very like the opinion which Mr. Spectator had expressed fifty years earlier.

'The truth is, the young women here are so mortally silly and insipid that I cannot bear them. Upon my word, except you and your sister, I have scarce met with one worthy of being spoke to. Their chat is all on caps, balls, cards, dress, nonsense. . . . The women in Scotland have twice—thrice their freedom, with all their virtue, and are very conversable and agreeable—their educations are more finished. In England I was quite struck to see how forward the girls are made—a child of ten years old will chat and keep you company with the ease of a woman of 26.—But then, how does this education go on? Not at all; it absolutely stops short. If I had gone into almost any other house and talked at this rate, to a young lady, she would have amused me with gaping and yawning all the time, and would not have understood a word I have uttered.'

This hardly agrees with the complaint (of about the same date) made by a Scottish writer in a Scottish periodical, *The Mirror*, about the young ladies of Edinburgh. There they are accused of aping the worst side of Englishwomen, of being vain, impertinent, indiscreet, and even worse. But then it was very natural for a Scottish visitor in England to belaud his own countrywomen.

Fanny was not merely intelligent, but learned. Though she taught herself, her reading included some quite ambitious study. Here are some passages from her diary, showing how she spent her time in her father's London house. The first is dated February 1769.

'How delightful a content do I at present enjoy! I have

scarce a wish, and am happy and easy as my heart can desire. All are at Lynn but us three, Papa, Hetty and I, so that I am very much alone, but to that I have no objection. I pass my time in working, reading and thrumming the harpsichord. I am now reading Stanyan's *Grecian History*. Susie and I correspond constantly. Her letters would not disgrace a woman of forty years of age. I must to bed immediately.

'I write now from a pretty neat little closet of mine that is in the bedchamber, where I keep all my affairs.'

Saturday. 'If my dear Susette were here I should want nothing. We are still only us three together. I seldom quit home. But why should I when I am so happy in it? We have a library which is an everlasting resource when attacked by the spleen—I have always a sufficiency of work—music is a feast which can never grow insipid—and, in short, I have all the reason that mortal ever had to be contented with my lot. How strongly, how forcibly do I feel to whom I owe all the happiness I enjoy! It is to my father!'

Later on, when Susette returned from France, she and Fanny continued their studies together.

Poland St. 1770. 'I have not written for an age—all my time was due to my dearest Susette with whom I have been reading French, having taught myself that charming language for the sake of its authors—for I shall never want to speak it.'

November. 'Susette and myself are extremely engaged at present in studying a book lately published upon Music. It promises to teach us Harmony and the Theory of Music. However, I have no expectation of going so deep in the science myself. I am reading—I blush to say for the first time—Pope's works. He is a darling poet of our family. It is with exquisite delight I make myself acquainted with him.'

Sunday, June 13th. 'Susette and I are extremely comfortable together; and my father, who is all kindness, makes us truly happy. We are both studying Italian. We are reading some of the best French works together, not regularly, but only such parts as are adapted either to our capacity or inclination.'

Fanny seems always to have grudged the waste of time involved in paying calls. We have already seen what she

thought about this when she was at Lynn Regis in 1768. Here are two more of her outbursts upon this subject :

' Miss Crawford called there lately—she is very earnest for us to visit her—but we are not very earnest about the matter—however, the code of customs makes our spending one evening with her necessary. Oh how I hate this vile custom which obliges us to make slaves of ourselves—to sell the most precious property we boast—our time, and to sacrifice it to every prattling impertinent who chooses to command it ! '

Lynn Regis, St. Margaret's Churchyard, July. ' We have nothing but visiting here, and this perpetual round of constrained civilities, to persons quite indifferent to us, is the most provoking and tiresome thing in the world, but it is unavoidable in a country town. It is a most unworthy way of spending our precious and irrecoverable time, to devote it to those who know not its value.'

However, Fanny managed to get some amusement out of her visits to Lynn. Her power of observation and the pleasure which she took in describing her experiences entertained herself, as it was afterwards to entertain her readers. Here, for example, is her account of a wedding —giving us incidentally her views on weddings in general and showing that Fanny, like Dorothy Osborne, was in her youth ' much out of love with a thing called marriage '.

Wednesday, July 10 *in the morning.* ' We have just had a wedding—a public wedding, and very fine it was I assure you. The bride is Miss Case, daughter of an alderman of Lynn, with a great fortune ; the bridegroom Mr. Bagg. Our house is in the churchyard, and exactly opposite the great church door—so that we had a very good view of the procession. The walk that leads up to the church was crowded—almost incredibly a prodigious mob indeed—I'm sure I trembled for the bride—oh what a gauntlet for any woman of delicacy to run ! Mr. Bagg handed the bride and her company out of their coach, and then Mr. Case took her hand and led her to the church door, and the bridegroom followed handing Mrs. Case. Oh how short a time does it take to put an eternal end to a woman's liberty ! I don't think they were a quarter of an hour in the church altogether. . . .

A Public Wedding. From a drawing by Rowlandson

'Well of all things in the world, I don't suppose anything can be so dreadful as a public wedding—my stars! I should never be able to support it.' Fanny Burney's Diary

'When they had been in the church about a quarter of an hour, the bell began to ring so merrily, so loud, and the doors opened—we saw them walk down the Isle, the bride and bridegroom first—hand in hand—the bridegroom looked so gay, so happy! She looked grave, but not sad—and, in short, all was happy and charming. Well of all things in the world, I don't suppose anything can be so dreadful as a public wedding—my stars! I should never be able to support it!'

On the whole, then, Fanny was very happy in her way of life. This happiness she owed largely to the 'furnishing' of her mind, which saved her both from idleness and from boredom. In some respects her education was imperfect; she was not at all athletic, for example, and even dancing tired her. Soon after she has begun her diary she writes:

Wednesday, August. 'We had a large party to the Assembly on Monday, which was so so—I danced but one country dance—the room was so hot, and was really fatiguing. Don't you laugh to hear a girl of fifteen complain of the fatigue of dancing? Can't be helped! if you will laugh you must I think.'

And on another occasion she says she was 'fatigued to death after the second dance'. Fortunately, however, her partner declared that he would rather 'sit with you than dance with any other lady'.

Not until she was twenty-one years old did she try sea-bathing. She gives the following account of her experience:

'To-day for the first time I bathed. Ever since I went to Torbay I have been tormented with a dreadful cold, till within this day or two. . . . I was terribly frightened, and really thought I should never have recovered from the plunge. I had not breath enough to speak for a minute or two, the shock was beyond expression great; but, after I got back to the machine I presently felt myself in a glow that was delightful—it is the finest feeling in the world, and will induce me to bathe as often as will be safe.'

From a cartoon by Gillray, 1810

Southend. The Beach in 1831

The development of the seaside

'Their mornings are drawled away, with perhaps a saunter upon the beach which commands the delightful view of half a dozen boys, and as many fishing smacks'.
Bonnel Thornton, 'A citizen's family setting out for Brighthelmstone'

Neither was Fanny interested in dress. She never describes her own clothes, and only mentions other people's when they are either displeasing or striking, or outrageously fashionable. When she first met Dr. Johnson, for example, she describes his singular appearance and then goes on :

'His dress too, considering the times, and that he had meant to put on his best, being engaged to dine in a large company, was as much out of the common road as his figure ; he had a large wig, snuff colour coat, and gold buttons, but no ruffles to his shirt, dirty fists and black worsted stockings.'

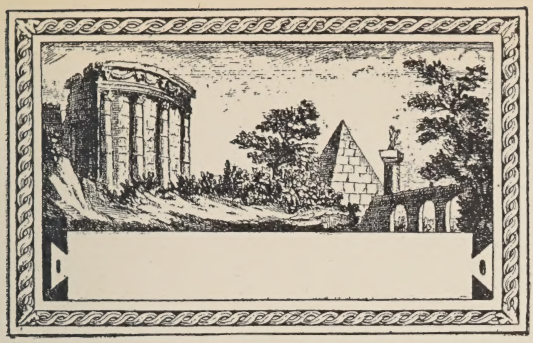
Fanny had a great contempt for overdressed men and makes great fun of the elaborately-got-up beaux who used to call [1] or leave a card on the morning following a ball.

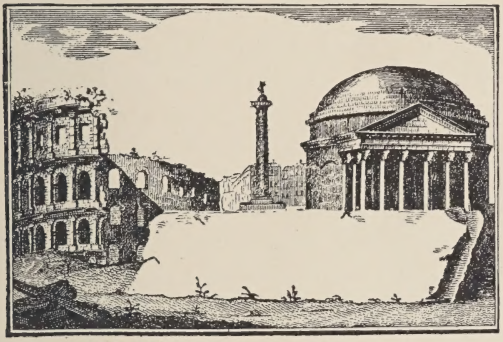
Here are Fanny's two fullest accounts of women's dress at this time. The first is taken from a letter in which she gives a list of the guests at a large party with a short description of each. The second is an extract from her diary :

'Miss B. something : a young lady quite a la mode, every part of her dress the very pink and extreme of the fashion ; her head erect and stiff as any statue ; her voice low, delicate and mincing ; her hair higher than any twelve wigs stuck one on the other ; her waist taper and pinched evidently ; her eyes cast languishingly from one object to another, and her conversation very much the thing.'

'Hetty and I took a walk in the Park on Sunday morning, where among others we saw the young and handsome Duchess of Devonshire walking in such an undressed and slatternly manner

[1] If they were prevented from calling they sent a card and an apology as stiff and elaborate as their own dress. Like this : 'Mr. Bedford, after the honour of dancing last Night with Miss Hammond, is concerned that he is prevented waiting on her this Morning by a sudden call to Town ; begs his Compliments may be acceptable, hopes this Message will find her in perfect Health, and that she took no Cold. Friday Morn, Eight o'Clock.'





Three visiting cards in the Italian fashion which came in at the end of the eighteenth century

as in former times Mrs. Rishton might have done in Chesington garden. Two of her curls came quite unpinned, and fell lank on one of her shoulders ; one shoe was down at heel, the trimming of her jacket and petticoat was in some places unsown ; her cap was awry, and her cloak which was rusty and powdered, was flung half on and half off. Had she not had a servant in superb livery behind her she would certainly have been affronted. Every creature turned back to stare at her.'

But although Fanny despised extremes of fashion, she was herself a good needlewoman and disliked people who could not dress neatly and prettily.

Dress and sports apart, there was hardly any side of life in which Fanny was not interested. She was a keen student of plays, and loved to see her adored David Garrick acting in them ; she could appreciate Sir Joshua Reynolds's pictures when she paid a visit to his studio. She took part in amateur theatricals; she designed charming fancy costumes for masked balls ; she was a skilled piano player and performed at her father's concerts. She was a lover of the opera and of good singing. She could listen with interest to Dr. Johnson's conversation and could entertain distinguished visitors without shyness. She was a shrewd judge of character and enjoyed writing down her impressions of people when she met them ; she was a great letter writer and had many correspondents. She was well informed generally, and much surprised to find that rich and titled women often knew less than she did. In 1777, for example, when she paid a visit to Sir Herbert and Lady Packington at a famous country house, she was amazed when she discovered that Lady Packington not merely did not know the history of her own house, but was ignorant of English history generally. She writes :

'The next day, as it rained all the morning, we could not walk out. Therefore Lady Packington produced some coins she had

The PARK.
or the most Fashionable Dress for the Year 1777.

LONDON Printed for BEATTIE & J. BENNETT N°33 Fleet Street, as the Act directs, 10th Nov.r 1777.

HANOVER-SQUARE ROOMS.

CONCERT upon an entirely NEW PLAN.

SIGNOR SAMPIERI

Begs Leave to inform the Nobility, Gentry, and the Connoiſſeurs of Muſic in general, that

On MONDAY, the 21ſt of MAY, 1798,

Will be exhibited an extraordinary

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE,

OF HIS OWN INVENTION AND COMPOSITION.

ACT I.

A Piece of Muſic called NIGHT,

Divided into Five Parts, viz.

EVENING, MIDNIGHT, AURORA, DAYLIGHT, and the RISING of the SUN;

And in order to gratify the Audience more highly, and add grandeur to the Effect of the Muſic, the Room will be decorated with TRANSPARENCIES, in the following Manner:

EVENING will be diſplayed by a Tranſparency of *Jupiter*, *Venus*, and other *Stars*.

MIDNIGHT by a Tranſparency, with a View of the *Moon* gradually riſing.

AURORA and DAYLIGHT by the Notes of the various Birds, in a ſurpriſing Manner.

The Stars and the Moon will then gradually diſappear, and Daylight be followed with the Sun riſing in ſplendour.

The Second Piece, Four Pieces of Muſic in Imitation of

The FOUR SEASONS of the YEAR.

And the Third Piece of Muſic,

A SERENATA,

With a Deſcription in the Bill at the Room.

A Concert advertisement of 1798

A Concert at Montagu House, 1736

From a drawing by Marcellus Laroon in the British Museum

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had very lately dug out by the nun's chapel ; and then got Rapin's *History of England*, and we went to work in viewing the coins of the different reigns, in order to discover the age of those she had found. She showed so much ignorance of History as to render her researches truly ridiculous. She always took it for granted that every king of the same name followed in regular succession ; and so, when we had examined the coins of Henry the Second, "Now", said she, "we'll come to Henry the Third", but happening instead, to meet with Richard the First, was not at all abashed at her blunder ! '

Fanny's first love affair occurred when she was twenty-three years old. When on a visit to her aunts she met a young man, Mr. Barlow, who immediately fell in love with her, and four days later sent her a written proposal. On receiving this Fanny says, ' I took not a moment to deliberate. I felt that my heart was totally insensible—and I felt that I could never consent to unite myself to a man whom I did not very highly value. However, as I do not consider myself as an independent member of society, and as I knew I could depend upon my father's kindness, I thought it incumbent upon me to act with his concurrence.' Her father was extremely anxious that she should not act hastily in refusing Mr. Barlow, lest she should repent of her decision later. Her aunts too had a good deal to say on Mr. Barlow's behalf, but Fanny insisted that she would ' rather a thousand times die an old maid than be married except from affection ', and that if she were to marry Mr. Barlow she should ' expire of fatigue with him '. ' To unite myself for life to a man who is not infinitely dear to me is what I can never never consent to, unless, indeed I was strongly urged by my father.'

Later on Mr. Barlow both called and wrote again and again. Dr. Burney urged Fanny to think carefully before refusing him. This time Fanny writes :

' I was terrified to death. I felt the utter impossibility of

resisting not merely my father's persuasion but even his advice. Mr. Barlow I know nothing against, but oh, I felt, that he was no companion for my heart ! I wept like an infant, and passed the whole day in more misery than I ever did before in my life.'

Happily, however, Dr. Burney was ' too indulgent to require me to give my hand without my heart ', and Mr. Barlow was definitely refused.

Fanny's relief was heartfelt, for as she says, ' I have long accustomed myself to the idea of being an old maid, and the title has lost all its terrors in my ears.'

Fanny Burney's first novel, *Evelina*, was in part the story of her own life. The heroine was a girl of seventeen, very like Fanny, and many of the characters and incidents in the book were based upon Fanny's own experience. Fanny wrote the book secretly and copied it out, as she says, ' with infinite toil and labour ' in a disguised handwriting.

' In the daytime I could only take odd moments, so that I was obliged to sit up the greater part of many nights, in order to get it ready.' Knowing that it was an almost unheard of thing for a woman to write a book, Fanny sent it to the publisher by her brother Charles, who was instructed to say that a friend had written it, and who brought back word that the publisher approved of it. Fanny then let her father into the secret, but dared not show him the book or even tell him its title. He ' could not help laughing, but was much surprised at the communication ', and promised to keep the secret.

The next year, in January 1778, the book was published anonymously. The title was *Evelina*, or *A young Lady's Entrance into the World*. In it Fanny says, ' I have only presumed to trace the accidents to which a young woman is liable. I have not pretended to show the world what it actually is, but what it appears to a girl of seventeen.'

The book made an immense sensation. Every one was charmed with it, and many guesses were made as to the author. Very few people supposed it possible for a woman to have written it. When finally the secret leaked out Fanny became famous all over Europe and the book was translated into three languages. Fanny for a long time feared lest she should ' lose her reputation ' through it, but the book was so good that it brought her honour rather than disgrace. Dr. Burney, speaking of it to his

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Art. 49. *Evelina*, or a young Lady's Entrance into the World, 12mo. 3 vols. 9s. Lowndes. 1778.

This novel has given us ſo much pleaſure in the peruſal, that we do not heſitate to pronounce it one of the moſt ſprightly, entertaining, and agreeable productions of this kind, which has of late fallen under our notice. A great variety of natural incidents, ſome of the comic ſtamp, render the narrative extremely intereſting. The characters, which are agreeably diverſified, are conceived and drawn with propriety, and ſupported with ſpirit. The whole is written with great eaſe and command of language. From this commendation, however, we muſt except the character of a ſon of Neptune, whoſe manners are rather thoſe of a rough, uneducated country ſquire, than thoſe of a genuine ſea-captain.

An extract from ' The Monthly Review ' for April 1778

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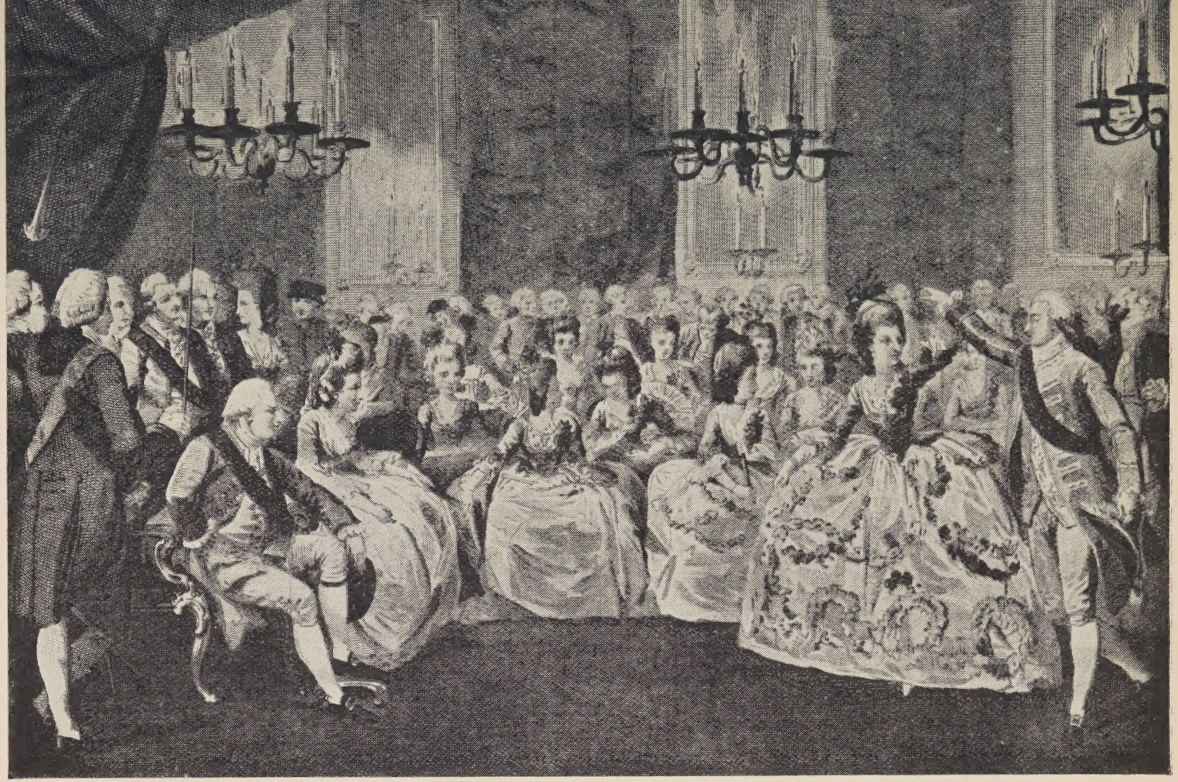
wife, said, ' For a young woman's work I look upon it as really wonderful, and that so far from bringing her discredit the reverse will be the case.' Sir Joshua Reynolds and Edmund Burke sat up all night reading it. Fanny on hearing this news was so delighted that, as she tells us, she rushed into the garden and danced a jig round the mulberry tree on the lawn.

The rest of Fanny's story must be told shortly. After 1778 she became a famous author and her diary writing and correspondence gradually dropped off. Her second book, *Cecilia*, was published in 1782, and in that year she was called to court by King George III and offered the



A View of the Ball at St. James's on the King's Birthday, June 4, 1782

Engraved for 'The Ladies' Magazine'

post of Mistress of the Robes to Queen Charlotte. This it would have been disloyal to refuse, but nothing could have been more disagreeable, or less suited to Fanny's inclinations, than her life at court. The perpetual card playing, the elaborate dressing, the meals, gossip, and etiquette wearied and disgusted her. Nor was she skilled in the little arts of a court. Lady Lanover tells us that 'Queen Charlotte used to complain to Mrs. Delaney that Miss Burney could not learn to tie the bow of her necklace on Court days without giving her pain by getting the hair at the back of the neck tied in with it.' In 1791, after five miserable years, she retired. The next year she met in London a French refugee, M. d'Arblay, and immediately knew him for the 'man after her own heart' for whom she had been waiting. They were married in 1793, but having very little money to live on, Fanny cast about for the means of earning some and wrote her third book, *Camilla*. Camilla Cottage, in which Fanny and her husband lived happily, was bought and furnished out of the proceeds of the book. Fanny and her husband spent the latter part of their lives quietly in France. Fanny came to England in 1812 to nurse her ailing father, and in 1814, after his death, went back to Paris and occupied herself writing his memoirs. Her husband died in 1818, as the result of a fall from his horse, but she herself lived till the great age of eighty-eight.

From Fanny Burney's time onwards writing became a respectable profession for women, and many brilliant women—Hannah More, Maria Edgworth, Jane Austen, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Charlotte Brontë followed where Fanny had led.

But before these great names come the 'blue-stocking' women, who were famous in their generation, and are not forgotten even in ours. Fanny Burney was a 'blue-

stocking', although not the first of the tribe. The wearer of the original blue stockings was Benjamin Stillingfleet, botanist, athlete, verse maker, and conversationalist. 'His dress was remarkably grave and in particular it was observed that he wore blue stockings. Such was the excellence of his conversation, that his absence was felt as so great a loss, that it used to be said "We can do nothing without the *blue stockings*," and thus by degrees the title was established.' So wrote Boswell, who knew him well.

The 'title' at first served both men and women and stood for wit and wisdom, or rather for a happy union of both qualities. The 'blue-stockings' prized, as the best of all knowledge,

> the way
> How wits may be both learn'd and gay.

They were famed not only for learning, but for those 'arts and graces' of conversation which could display learning readily, appropriately, and with charm. Later the title became restricted to women, and, finally, when the first great age of the 'blue-stockings' had passed away, the phrase lost its honourable meaning and became a byword and a term of reproach. In our day it has been used (perhaps unfairly) for women of much learning but little charm, well informed but ill dressed; for scholars skilled maybe in Greek, but ignorant of the making of a pudding, an art which Dr. Johnson thought to be the test of a true woman.

The rise and fall of the blue-stockings is an interesting chapter in the history of eighteenth-century women. Actually it begins earlier, for the foreword to the chapter is to be found in a forgotten seventeenth-century essay on the 'Education of Women' and more particularly in the protests there made against 'breeding women low'.

And as early as 1694 we have Mary Astell proposing a college for the higher education of women. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was Mrs. Astell's ideal of an educated woman :

> A genius so sublime, and so complete,

writes the enthusiastic Mrs. Mary of her noble namesake. But although Lady Mary had advised that women should strive to be clever, she was, as we have already seen, careful to advise them to hide their learning lest it might frighten away the men. Daniel Defoe, too, looked for the coming of the blue-stocking women in that essay on education from which we have already quoted in chapter iv. It is curious to notice how the study of history was thought to be specially fitted to make women well informed and interesting—the two halves, as it were, of the blue-stocking mind. Not only did Defoe write in praise of history, but Mrs. Chapone (herself a famous blue-stocking) was convinced that history contained within itself almost everything necessary to a complete education. 'I know of nothing equally proper to entertain and improve at the same time, or that is so likely to form and strengthen your judgement'; and she adds that 'more materials for conversation are supplied by this kind of knowledge, than almost any other.' Learning in women, you will notice, is no longer to be hidden ; it is to come out into the light of day, or rather into the pleasant candle-light of Mrs. Montagu's or Mrs. Thrale's dinner-parties. For the blue-stockings were fond of society. Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Thrale, and Mrs. Vesey were famous hostesses who believed that good talk was as necessary to a successful dinner-party as good food. They elevated dining out into a fine art and took almost as much pains over their entertaining as the hostess in Mr. Mallock's *New Republic*, who thoughtfully

Mrs. Thrale giving tea to Dr. Johnson

From the cartoon by Rowlandson

provided a card for each guest on which was written the subjects they were expected to talk upon. Mrs. Montagu believed in the 'half circle' method of arranging guests. You were desired to sit (after dinner) in a wide half-moon made up of twenty or even more guests ; most talked, a few listened, some, no doubt, yawned behind the shelter of their fans. Mrs. Vesey broke up her guests into little groups, which was the more natural method but not so well suited to the brilliant conversational solos in which the blue-stockings delighted. Cards were banished from all blue-stocking parties, because card-playing killed conversation. And here let us introduce the clever women who sat in Mrs. Montagu's semicircles ; their names and styles have come down to us in verse, of a kind.

Hanah More's pathetic pen
Painting high th' impassioned scene
Carter's piety and learning,
Little Burney's quick discerning ;
Cowley's neatly pointed wit
Healing those her satires hit ;
Smiling Streatfield's iv'ry neck,
Nose and motions—à la Grecque !
Let Chapone retain a place,
And the mother of her Grace,
Each art of conversation knowing
High-bred, eloquent Boscawen ;
Thrale, in whose expressive eyes
Sits a soul above disguise,
Skilled with wit and sense t' impart
Feelings of a generous heart.
Lucan, Leveson, Greville, Crewe ;
Fertile-minded Montagu,
Who makes each rising wit her care
And brings her knowledge from afar !
Whilst her tuneful tongue defends
Authors dead and absent friends ;

Bright in genius, pure in fame,
Herald, haste, and these proclaim !

Dr. Johnson, too, joined in this chorus of compliments paid to the blue-stockings. He avowed that the ladies had learning enough to govern the country and carried his joke so far as to suggest certain names (all to be found in Dr. Burney's verses) for public offices, as thus :

CARTER—Archbishop of Canterbury ;
MONTAGU—First Lord of the Treasury ;
MRS. CHAPONE—Preceptor to the Princes.
HANNAH MORE—Poet Laureate.

'And no place for me ?' cried Mrs. Thrale. 'No, No,' replied Dr. Johnson, 'you will get into Parliament by your little silver tongue, and then rise by your own merit.' 'And what shall I do ?' exclaimed Fanny Burney. 'Oh, we will send you for a spy, and perhaps you will be hanged,' rejoined the Doctor, with that loud laugh which Tom Davis the bookseller said reminded him of a rhinoceros. But this very charming flattery seems sincerity itself compared with what the women blue-stockings said of each other. Fanny Burney, for instance, copies down in her diary the competition in compliments which followed on the publication of her second novel, *Cecilia*.

The Duchess of Portland. 'Cry, to be sure we did. Oh, Mrs. Delaney, shall you ever forget how we cried ? But then we had so much laughter to make us amends ; we were never left to sink under our concern.'

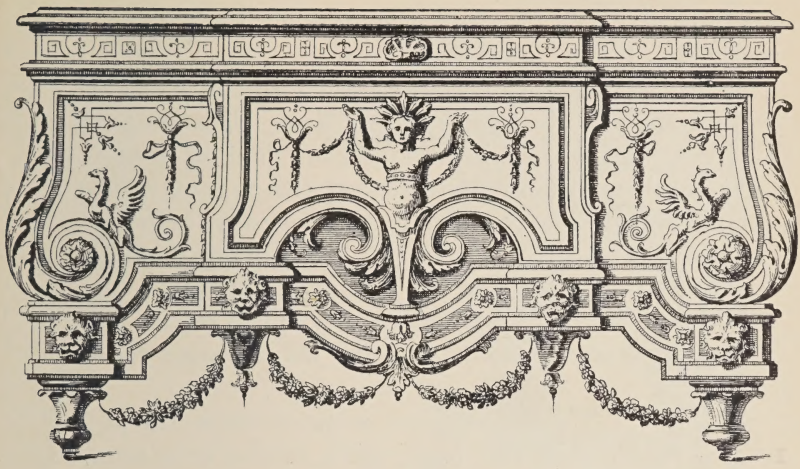
'For my part,' said Mrs. Chapone, 'when I first read it, I did not cry at all. I was in an agitation that half killed me, that shook all my nerves, and made me unable to sleep at nights, for the suspense I was in ; but I could not cry from excess of eagerness.'

Now Mrs. Delaney takes up the tale. 'No book was

ever so useful as this, because none other that is so good was ever so much read.' And much more.

Perhaps Hannah More was the most admired of all the blue-stockings. A bishop said and possibly even believed that her 'Cheap Repository Tracts', which were intended to make poor people good, were 'sublime' and 'immortal'. However 'sublime' they might have been, and it is a rather large word to use about tracts, they were not destined for immortality; perhaps they wore better in the West Indies, whither Bishop Porteous sent 'shiploads' for the edifying of the negroes.

Time has somewhat dimmed the lustre of the blue-stockings. Yet it must not be supposed that all this adulation, here reported in small part, was merely idle flattery befooling empty vanity. The blue-stockings were indeed women of proved ability. Edmund Burke, who was not accustomed to talk idly and who knew personally most of the blue-stockings, gave it as his opinion that the most notable feature of his age was the number of extraordinary women it had produced. We ourselves owe no small debt to the blue-stockings. They made life a larger thing for women. They gave ample proof, and at a time when it was badly needed, that women were worthy of education, and although it was left for a later generation to devise an education more worthy of women, it was the blue-stockings who first blazed the trail.



VII

COUNTRY LADIES AND COTTAGE HOUSEWIVES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the last chapter we saw how, towards the middle of the eighteenth century, a few women at least, of whom Fanny Burney was typical, began to tire of the emptiness and frivolity of an idle life and to look for more serious occupations. The same weariness brought about a return to country life and a new interest in country pursuits. Fashionable women began to spend at least a few months of every year in the country, where they would look something like the ladies in the picture on p. 257.

This change is reflected in the literature of the period. Writers of the later eighteenth century paid much more attention to country life than those of the earlier half of the century had done, and knew much more about it.

From their books we can discover what life in the country really was like.

What was the eighteenth-century village like ? It was inhabited, broadly speaking, by three classes of people. There were first of all the squires or landed gentry with their families, living generally at the manor house and owning large estates which had usually belonged for generations to the same family. Part of the estate would be kept for the lord of the manor's own use ; the rest would be divided into farms and let out to tenant farmers. The squire also owned cottages which were rented by labourers.

Secondly came the farmers; some of these (the yeomen) owned their house and land, while others were tenants of the squire. The farmers employed labourers, to some of whom they let cottages, while others were boarded and lodged in the farmhouse. Finally there were the cottagers or squatters, some of whom owned their cottage and strip of land, while others rented from the squires or yeomen. The cottagers were employed partly in tilling their own bit of land, partly as day labourers on the farms.

All the land not so owned or held was common land, and each inhabitant had certain rights connected with it. He might cut hay on the common meadowland ; he might pasture his cattle, pigs, and geese on the common grazing land ; he might gather turf, peat, and brushwood for fuel from the common waste. These rights depended upon village custom and tradition, and had often been unchanged for centuries.

It is very difficult to draw hard-and-fast lines between the three classes of people. Some of the more prosperous yeomen were very like small squires ; some of the tenant farmers were farmers of their own land one day and labourers for some one else the next. But as far as their

An eighteenth-century family in silhouette. James Essex (architect of Cambridge, 1722–84), his wife and daughter

wives were concerned, the difference between the lady of the manor and the farmer's wife was greater than that between the wives of the farmers and of the labourers.

Let us look first at the duties of a lady of the manor. She was usually a very busy person. She spent most of her time on her country estate, and only paid very short visits to London. She considered herself concerned with the well-being of the whole village. She cared especially for the women, the children, and the sick. She was at home in every house in the village, and would pay visits and give help and advice wherever she was needed ; often she acted as nurse and doctor to the village. Sometimes, as we have said, she maintained a school in which village girls were trained for domestic service.

The squire's lady and her fondness for playing Providence to the village poor is laughed at in an amusing scene in one of Farquhar's plays, *The Beaux' Stratagem*. In *Lady Bountiful* Farquhar drew a portrait of the fussy benevolence of many country ladies ; just as in Mrs. Sullen, in the same play, he pictured another not uncommon type, the squire's wife made unhappy by her husband's brutality and country boorishness. The countrywoman, who comes seeking advice, mistakes Mrs. Sullen for Lady Bountiful.

Countrywoman. I come, an't please your ladyship—you're my Lady Bountiful, an't ye ?

Mrs. Sullen. Well, good woman, go on.

Wom. I come seventeen long mail to have a cure for my husband's sore leg.

Mrs. Sul. Your husband ! what, woman, cure your husband !

Wom. Ay, poor man, for his poor leg won't let him stir from home.

Mrs. Sul. There, I confess you have given me a reason. Well, good woman, I'll tell you what you must do. You must lay your husband's leg upon a table, and with a chopping-knife you must lay it open as broad as you can, then you must take out the bone,

2516.1

Frontispiece to Jonas Hanway's Journal, showing the fine town lady, accompanied by her pets, on a flying visit to the country

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and beat the flesh soundly with a rolling pin, then take salt, pepper, cloves, mace, and ginger, some sweet-herbs, and season it very well, then roll it up like brawn, and put it into the oven for two hours.

Wom. Heavens reward your ladyship !—I have two little babies too, that are piteous bad with the graips, an't please ye.

Enter LADY BOUNTIFUL.

Mrs. Sul. I beg your ladyship's pardon for taking your business out of your hands.

Lady Boun. Come, good woman, don't mind this mad creature ; I am the person that you want, I suppose. What would you have, woman ?

Mrs. Sul. She wants something for her husband's sore leg.

Lady Boun. What 's the matter with his leg, goody ?

And so Lady Bountiful prescribes for the unfortunate victim, and sends the good woman away satisfied.

Pamela Andrews after her marriage became a ' lady of the manor '. Just before Pamela was married we read that Mr. B. asked her whether she would rather live in London or on his two country estates alternately. Pamela preferred the country, whereupon Mr. B. said :

' But how will you bestow your time when you will have no visits to receive or pay ? No parties of pleasure to join in ? No card tables to employ your winter evenings and even, as the taste is, half the day, summer and winter.'

Pamela's reply was as follows :

' In the first place, sir, if you will give me leave, I will myself look into all such parts of the family management as may befit the mistress of it to inspect, and this I shall hope to do in such a manner as not to incur the ill will of any honest servant.

' Then, sir, I will ease you of as much of your family accounts as I possibly can.

' Then, sir, if I must needs be visiting or visited I will visit, if your goodness will allow me to do so, the unhappy poor in the neighbourhood around you, and administer to their wants and necessities.

'I will assist your housekeeper, as I used to do, in the making jellies, comfits, sweetmeats, marmalades, and cordials, and to pot, and candy, and preserve, for the uses of the family, and to make myself all the fine linen of it, for yourself and me.'

Soon after she was married, Pamela sent to a great friend a letter which showed that her castles in the air really had come true. 'The two ladies' of whom she speaks are Mr. B.'s sister, Lady Davers, and a friend, who are staying with Pamela in the country. Here is part of the letter :

'The two ladies insisted upon it that I would take them with me in my benevolent round which I generally take once a week among my poor and sick neighbours, and finding I could not avoid it I set out with them.

'The coach set us down by the side of a large common about five miles distant from our house, and we alighted and walked a little way, choosing not to have the coach come nearer that we might be taken as little notice of as possible, and they entered with me into two mean cots with great condescension and goodness ; one belonging to a poor widow, with five children, who had all been down in agues and fevers : the other to a man and his wife, bed rid with age and infirmities, and two honest daughters, one a widow with two children, the other married to a husbandman, who had also been ill, but now by comfortable cordials, and good physic, in a hopeful way.

'Now you must know that I am not so good as the old ladies of former days who used to distil cordial waters, and prepare medicines, and dispense them themselves But this is my method. I am upon an agreement with Mr Barrow, who is deemed a very skilful and honest apothecary, and one Mr. Simmonds, a surgeon of like character, to attend all such cases and persons as I shall recommend, Mr Barrow to administer physic and cordials, as he shall judge proper, and even in necessary cases to call in a physician. And, now and then, by looking in upon them myself, or sending a servant to ask questions, all is kept right.

'My Lady Davers observed a Bible, a Common Prayer Book, and a *Whole Duty of Man* in each cot, in leathern outside cases,

to keep them clean, and a Church Catechism or two for the children, and was pleased to say it was right.

'The ladies left tokens of their bounty behind them to both families, and all the good folks blessed and prayed for us at parting.

'We walked thence to our coach and stretched a little further, to visit two farmers' families about a mile distant from each other. One had the mother of the family with two sons, just recovering, the former from a fever, the latter from tertian agues. I asked when they saw Mr. Barrow. They told me, with great commendations of him that he had but just left them. I left them with a present, saying I should hardly see them again for some time, but would desire Mr. Barrow to watch over their healths.

'We proceeded then to the other farm. Here I found Mr. Barrow, and he gave me an account of the success of two other cases I had recommended to him; and told me that John Smith, a poor man, who in thatching a barn had fallen down and broken his leg, was in a fair way of recovery. This poor creature had like to have perished by the cruelty of the parish officers, who would have passed him away to Essex, where his settlement was,[1] though in a burning fever occasioned by his misfortune. But hearing of the case I directed Mr. Simmonds to attend him and to provide for him at my expense, and engaged if he died to bury him.

'After we had just looked in upon a country school, where I pay for the learning of eight children, we went home.

'And here, my dear Miss Darnford, is a cursory account of my benevolent weekly round, as the two ladies will call it.'

Dr. Johnson, writing in *The Rambler* (a magazine which came out in the years 1750–2), describes a certain Lady Bustle, whose enthusiasm for the 'Making of jellies, comfits, sweetmeats, marmalades and cordials' was even greater than Pamela's. The account is in the form of a letter, supposed to be written by a young town girl, a niece of Lady Bustle's, who goes to stay at her aunt's house in the country. The story begins on the

[1] The only place where he was entitled to get parish relief.

evening of the day when the girl first arrives at her aunt's house :

'Soon after supper my relation began to talk of the regularity of her family and the inconvenience of London hours, and at last let me know that they had purposed that night to go to bed sooner than was usual because they were to rise early in the morning to make cheesecakes. This hint sent me to my chamber, to which I was accompanied by all the ladies, who begged me to excuse some large sieves of leaves and flowers that covered two thirds of the floor, for they intended to distil them when they were dry, and they had no other room that so conveniently received the rising sun.

'The scent of the plants hindered me from rest, and therefore I rose early in the morning with a resolution to explore my new habitation. I stole unperceived by my busy cousins into the garden. Of the gardener I soon learned that his lady was the greatest manager in that part of the country, and that I was come hither at a time in which I might learn to make more pickles and conserves than could be seen at any other house a hundred miles round.

'It is indeed the great business of her life to watch the skillet on the fire, to see it simmer with the due degree of heat, and to snatch it off at the moment of projection ; and the employments to which she has bred her daughters are to turn rose leaves in the shade, to pick out the seeds of currants with a quill, to gather fruit without bruising it, and to extract bean flower water for the skin.

'She makes an orange pudding which is the envy of all the neighbourhood, and which she has hitherto found means of mixing and baking with such secrecy that the ingredient to which it owes its flavour has never been discovered. It is never known beforehand when this pudding will be produced ; she takes the ingredients privately into her own closet, employs her maids and daughters in different parts of the house, orders the oven to be heated for a pie, and places the pudding in it with her own hands. The mouth of the oven is then stopped, and all inquiries are vain.

'Lady Bustle has indeed by this incessant application to fruits and flowers contracted her cares into a narrow space and set herself free from many perplexities with which other minds are

disturbed. But I cannot perceive that she is more free from disquiets than those whose understandings take a wider range. Her marigolds, when they are almost cured, are often scattered by the wind. The rain sometimes falls upon fruit when it ought to be gathered dry. While her artificial wines are fermenting her whole life is restlessness and anxiety. Her sweetmeats are not always bright, and the maid sometimes forgets the just proportions of salt and pepper when venison is to be baked. Her conserves mould, her wines sour, and pickles mother, and, like the rest of mankind, she is every day mortified with the defeat of her schemes and the disappointment of her hopes.'

That Lady Bustle's Martha-like anxiety was not misplaced will be clear from a reading of the following recipe, taken from the Diary of Mrs. Lybbe Powis (1756–1808)

LAVENDER DROPS

'Six handfuls of lavender flowers stript from stalks, put them in a wide-mouth glass, and pour on them four quarts of the best spirit of wine, stop the glass very close with a double bladder tied fast down that nothing may breathe out, let it stand in a warm place six weeks, keep it circulating about, then distil it in a limbeck. When it is all run off, put to this water sage flowers, rosemary flowers, bugloss flowers, betony flowers, burrage flowers, lily of the valley flowers, cowslip flowers, each a handful gathered in their seasons in dry weather; let this stand six weeks, then put to it balm, motherwort, spike flowers; cut some small bay leaves, orange leaves, and the flowers of each an ounce; distil all these together again, then put in citron peel, lemon peel, dried single piony seed, and cinnamon, of each six drams, nutmeg, mace, candimums, cubebs, yellow saunders, of each half an ounce, lignum, aloes, one dram make these into a fine powder and put them into glass, then take juinbes, new and good, a pound stoned, and cut small, stop all quite close for six weeks more, shaking it often every day, then run it through a cotton bag, then put in prepar'd pearl two drams, ambergrease ditto, of saffron and saunders, and yellow saunders each an ounce, put these in a bag and hang them in water, and close up the glass well; at three week's end it will be fit for use.

N.B.—When you find any indisposition or fear of any fit, take

a small spoonful with a lump of sugar; it helps all palsies of what kind to cure.'

This recipe contained thirty-two ingredients and took twenty-one weeks to come to perfection.

There is more than a hint in Dr. Johnson's account of Lady Bustle that the fine town lady would not for long remain content with the simple pleasures of a country life. In another of his essays in *The Rambler* (No. 24) Dr. Johnson pictured very amusingly the miseries of a 'modish lady' condemned to live in the country. And the following mock letter to a periodical called *The World*, of date 11th October 1753, shows very amusingly that a young woman of fashion felt as much out of her element in the country, as Prior's country mouse was in the town.

MR. FITZADAM,

I am a young woman of fashion, and a great admirer of a town life. But it has been my misfortune, for these three months past, to be condemned to the odious country, and the more odious diversions of it, and this in compliance to an old-fashioned aunt. But it is not for the sake of abusing my friends or of ridiculing the country that I trouble you with this letter; I have really escaped such dangers in this retirement, that I mean it as a caution to my sex against giving up the innocent amusements of town life, for the destructive pleasures of woods and shades.

I had hardly been a week at my aunt's before I lost all the delicacy of quality; and from the palest complexion in the world and no appetite (the best proofs of high birth and of keeping good company) I began to look as rosy as a milkmaid, and to eat like a plough-boy. I shall never forget the awkward compliments that were made me upon these defects; but a new mortification followed which had like to have killed me. I began, absolutely, Mr. Fitz-Adam, to grow fat. What was to be done now? Why, I must walk, forsooth! I wondered they did not bid me fly; for to a woman of condition, who had never stirred out of doors but in her chair, flying seemed as easy as walking. But my disease was desperate, and so must be my cure: in short, they taught me

how to walk, and in less than a week I verily believe I had travelled a mile. . . .

SOPHIA SHUFFLE.

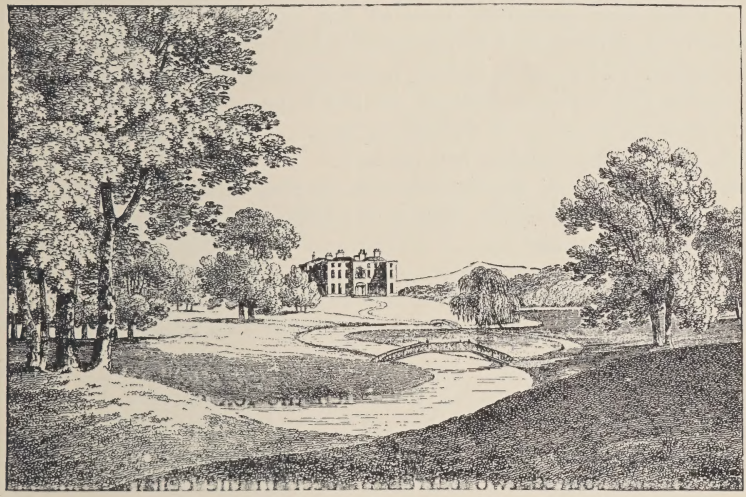
And to the loss of her town complexion she has to add the loss of her heart. She falls in love with a country squire, and in order to escape from the 'ridiculous duties and affections' which marriage would betray her into, is obliged to fly back to her beloved London and the 'amusements of polite life'.

Here is a further account, again by Dr. Johnson, of another well-to-do woman whose passion was for country life. Mrs. Busy is the wife of a small country squire who cared only for his horses and his dogs, while Mrs. Busy cared for farming. When her husband died, the following, according to *The Rambler*, is what happened :

'Mrs. B. was too much an economist to feel either joy or sorrow at his death. She received the compliments and consolations of her neighbours in a dark room, out of which she stole privately every night and morning to see the cows milked, and after a few days declared that she thought a widow might employ herself better than in nursing grief.

'She soon disencumbered herself from her weeds, and put on a riding hood, a coarse apron and short petticoats, and has turned a large manor into a farm of which she takes the management wholly upon herself. She rises before the sun to order the horses to their gears and sees them well rubbed down at their return from work. She attends the dairy morning and evening ; she walks out among the sheep at noon, counts the lambs and observes the fences, and where she finds a gap, stops it with a bush till it can be better mended. In harvest she rides afield in the waggon, and is very liberal of her ale from a wooden bottle. At her leisure hours she looks goose eggs, airs the wool room, and turns the cheese.'

As a rule, however, the mistress of a manor house did not herself undertake all the tasks performed by Lady Bustle and Mrs. Busy. If she had a great many responsi-



Eighteenth-century views of the charms of country life

For sources see list of illustrations

bilities in the village, she left the actual management of her house to a housekeeper. Smollett's novel, *Humphry Clinker*, gives us a fair idea of the many duties which such a housekeeper had to perform. Miss Tabitha Bramble, the mistress of Brambleton Hall, goes with her brother to pay a visit to Bath, but her heart is all the time at home at Brambleton, and she writes to her housekeeper, Mrs. Gwyllum, a series of letters full of minute instructions. Here is the first part of her letter after leaving home :

'Pray take particular care of the house while the family is absent. Let there be a fire constantly kept in my brother's chamber and mine. The maids, having nothing to do, may be set a spinning. I desire you'll clap a padlock on the wine cellar, and let none of the men have access to the strong beer. Don't forget to have the gate shut every evening before dark. The gardener and the hind may lie below in the laundry, to protect the house, with the blunderbuss and the great dog, and I hope you will have a watchful eye over the maids.'

When Miss Bramble has been away for some time, things begin to go wrong. She writes as follows :

'You say the gander has broken the eggs, which is a phenomenon I don't understand, for when the fox carried off the old goose last year, he[1] took her place, and hatched the eggs, and protected the goslings like a tender parent. Then you tell me the thunder has soured two barrels of beer in the cellar. But how the thunder should get there, when the cellar was double locked, I can't comprehend. However, I won't have the beer thrown out till I see it with my own eyes. Perhaps it will recover ; at least it will serve for vinegar to the servants. You may leave off the fires in my brother's chamber and mine, as it is uncertain when we return. I hope, Gwyllum, you'll take care there is no waste, and have an eye to the maids, and keep them to their spinning. I think they may go very well without beer in hot weather. Water will make them fair, and keep them cool and temperate.'

[1] The gander, not the fox !

Later, when the family is thinking of returning to Brambleton, Miss Bramble writes :

'By the first of next month you may begin to make constant fires in my brother's chamber and mine, and burn a faggot every day in the yellow damask room ; have the tester and curtains dusted and the feather bed and mattress well aired.

'Pray let the whole house and furniture have a thorough cleaning from top to bottom ; and let Roger search into and make a general clearance of the sly holes which the maids have in secret ; for I know they are much given to sloth and uncleanness.'

And finally, just before Miss Bramble comes home in triumph, with the husband whom she has secured in Bath, she writes :

'Good Mrs. Gwillum,

'I desire you will get your accounts ready for my inspection, as we are coming home without further delay. My spouse, the captain, being subject to rheumatics, I beg you will take great care to have the blue chamber, up two pairs of stairs, well warmed for his reception. Let the sashes be secured, the crevices stopped, the carpets laid, and the beds well tousled.'

According to this letter Miss Bramble evidently intends, when she has married her captain, to settle down as Lady of the Manor for the rest of her life. At least, she is leaving Bath with a light heart. If there were many women like her the ghost of John Evelyn might smile to see the kind of life which he remembered in his youth growing up in the country again.

Let us now turn to the women with whom the country ladies were associated—the wives of the farmers and the labourers. The lives led by women of these two classes were very much alike, though the house which they ruled might be, like Mrs. Busy's, a manor house converted to farm use, or simply a tiny cottage.

To speak first of the house. Sanitary arrangements

were of the most primitive kind. Water was seldom laid on to the house. It had to be fetched from a well, pump, or spring, either in the farm-yard or in the road outside the cottage. The house, whether farm or cottage, was seldom more than two storeys high. It usually had a heavy, thatched or stone-tiled roof, steeply sloping, under which were attics in which fruit could be stored. There might also be cellars for meat, butter, milk, potatoes, and fuel. The walls were immensely thick, and might be either of brick, stone, timber filled in with cement or plaster, or wattle and daub.[1] Brick was considered driest, stone strongest, timber warmest, and of course wattle and daub cheapest. Windows were few and small, often gabled, with hinged or casement openings, and sometimes 'latticed'—divided by leading into tiny, diamond-shaped panes. Doors were usually of oak, very stout, and without locks or door handles, but secured instead by drop-latches and sliding oak bars.

The ground-floor rooms had usually tiled, brick, or even trampled mud floors, which were frequently kept strewn with sand. Henry Teonge, a Navy chaplain in Charles II's reign, notices for a 'strainge sight' the sanded floors of Deal. 'The other thing which was strainge to mee was, that in all places else where ever I yet was, the cheifest care of the nieate house-wife was to keepe theire roomes clean from all manner of dust, by sweeping, washing, and rubbing them : But heare cleane contrary ; for haveing first swept them cleane, they then strew them all over with sand, yea their very best chambers.' Teonge was an inland man, and possibly the 'nicely sanded floor' was peculiar to seacoast-towns. The chimneys were wide; the hearths, often made of brick or of stone, were

[1] A mud and cement mixture strengthened with twigs, hardened by hammering and trampling, and baked dry by the sun. (See illustration on p. 293.)

immense, so that logs rather than coal could be burnt. Round the fireplace might be built a chimney corner—a cosy stone or brick seat whose high back protected the occupants from the draught. From the living rooms steep stairs, or even ladders, led up into the bedrooms.

The centre of the farm or cottage life was the kitchen. This had usually whitewashed walls and a low ceiling, supported by a massive oak beam running the length of it. From the beam hung hams, sides of bacon, game, and bunches of dried herbs. The wide chimney was used for smoking bacon and the open hearth for roasting joints of meat, which either turned upon a spit before the fire or hung from a roasting-jack above it. In the great ovens the family bread was baked.

Furniture was very heavy and solid, often beautifully made and handed down from family to family for generations. The tables, benches, and four-poster bedsteads were usually of oak. Each house possessed a grandfather clock, a few wheel-backed or carved oak chairs, a spinning-wheel, an oak chest for linen, and a copper warming-pan. Plates, dishes, and mugs were often made of pewter and wood rather than of glass or china.

The care of such a cottage or farm involved a great deal of work, especially if the housewife was particular. Many such 'house-proud' women have been described by eighteenth-century novelists. Here is an account of one such, Rebecca Wilmot, given by Hannah More in her *Tales for the Common People*, written about 1800 :

'A spot on her hearth, or a bit of rust on a brass candlestick, would throw her into a violent passion. Her oak table was so bright you could almost see to put your cap on in it. She would keep poor Hester [1] from Church to stone the space under the

[1] Hester is Rebecca's daughter.

chairs in fine patterns and flowers. She was sulky and disappointed if any ladies happened to call in and did not seem delighted with the flowers which she used to draw with a burnt stick on the whitewash of the chimney corners.'

A lesser known woman, Elizabeth Mure (1700–90) has left an account of social life in her native Scotland which is of peculiar interest because the writer takes a view of the value of social history, common enough nowadays, but rare indeed in the eighteenth century.

'Had we a particular account of the manners of our own country [she writes] and of the changes which have taken place from time to time since the reign of William IIIrd, no history could be more entertaining. . . .

The 1727 is as far back as I can remember. At that time there was little bread in Scotland; Manefactorys brought to no perfection, either in linnen or woolen. Every woman made her web of wove linnen, and bleched it herself; it never rose higher than a 2 shillings the yeard, and with this cloth was every body cloathed. . . . I remember in the 30 or 31 of a ball where it was agreed that the Company should be dress'd in nothing but what was manufacur'd in the country. My sisters were as well dress'd as any, and their gowns were strip'd linen at 2*s.* and 6*d.* per yard. Their heads and ruffles were of Paisly muslings, at 4 and sixpence, with four peny edging from Hamilton; all of them the finest that could be had. A few years after this, wevers were brought over from Holland, and manefactorys for linen established in the West. The dress of the ladys was nearly as expencive as at present, tho not so often renewed. At the time I mention houps were worn constantly 4 yards and a half wide, which required much silk to cover them; and gould and silver was much used for triming, never less than three rows round the peticot; so that tho the silk was slight the price was increased by the triming.

Their tables were as full as at present, tho' very ill dressed and as ill served up. They eat out of Pewder, often ill cleaned; but were nicer in their linen than now, which was renewed every day in most Gentlemens familys, and allwise napkins beside the cloth. The servants eat ill; having a sett hour for the week, of three days broth and salt meat, the rest megare, with plenty of bread and small

bear. Their wages were small; the men from 3 to 4 pounds in the year, the maids from 30 shillings to 40. At these times I mention few of the maids could either sew or dress linen; it was all smouthed in the mangle but the lady's headdresses, which were done by their own maids and the gentlemen's shirts by the housekeeper. The prices of provisions were about a third of what they are now; beaf from 1½ to 2 pen per pound; Butter 2 pen ½ peny; cheese 3 fardings' or 1 peny; eggs 1 p. the Dozen.'

REAL WELCH MUTTON.

No. 2, BRUTON-STREET, NEW BOND-STREET

LEWELLYN and Co. beg leave to inform the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public, that they have eſtabliſhed a Plan, at a very conſiderable Expence for the regular Conveyance of Mutton from Wales, and that they may be ſupplied with REAL WELCH WETHER MUTTON, which the Proprietors engage to be SEVEN YEARS OLD, at which Age Mutton is in the higheſt Perfection, which they Pledge themſelves to be bred and fatted on the famous Welch Mountains and when fatteſt will not Weigh more than Thirty-ſix Pounds each.—The Mutton from theſe Hills, on account of its Age and peculiarly cloſe and fine Texture, will keep many Days longer in the Larder, and preſerve its Gravy in dreſſing far beyond any other. The Flavour, either roaſted or in Paſty, is allowed to be Superior to moſt Veniſon, and is one of the greateſt Delicacies brought to Table. The Fore Quarters, in particular, are recommended by Phyſicians to ſick and delicate Perſons, as being tender, and affording more Nutriment than any other Meat.

At the end of the eighteenth century meat was beginning to be imported as a luxury. Advertisement of about 1800

In the early eighteenth century very few cottages were without either a garden or a patch of ground upon which poultry, goats, or a cow could be kept. In addition, common rights allowed the labourer to turn a certain number of sheep or geese out on the wastes. So that both small farmers and labourers could supply at least some of their own needs in the way of bacon, lard, butter, cheese, milk, eggs, poultry, and meat.

The eighteenth-century country housewife worked as hard as her forbear in the Middle Ages. Each village, farm, or cottage was much more of a little world in itself than it is nowadays, and supplied almost all its own needs. True, there was usually a village cobbler, blacksmith, carpenter, and miller, and there were markets and fairs held at regular times and places, but shops and tradesmen counted for very little. The motto for a farmer's or labourer's wife seems to have been ' Do not pay others to do anything which you can possibly do yourself and do not buy anything which you can possibly make yourself.' By virtue of the same principle wages were paid as far as possible in kind rather than in money. Thus the farmer who employed labourers would often board and lodge them on the farm and deduct from their wages accordingly.

What then were the country housewife's duties ? In the first place, she was responsible for the family food supply. Meat she might buy from a butcher or local farmer, but very seldom. When her pig was killed she would cure the bacon and melt down the lard. Bread she would make at home—usually twice a week. The milk of her own cow would be made into butter and cheese. Beer, the usual drink in the country, she would brew from malt and hops. She would make pickles and preserves, and might prepare home-made wines from rhubarb, elder-berry, or cowslips. If she was the wife of a farmer who employed day labourers, she would have to feed not only her own family but the labourers as well. At certain seasons of the year—at haymaking, harvesting, sheep-shearing, and apple-gathering times, for example, when extra help was needed—she would prepare a feast for all who came—sometimes for the whole village. Here is an account of one such feast, given by Hannah More in her *Tales for the Common People.* Mrs. White is a

Rustic Courtship

From Rowlandson's ' World in Miniature ', 1816

Somersetshire farmer's wife, and the occasion is the sheep-shearing :

'Mrs. White dressed a very plentiful supper of meat and pudding, and spread out two tables. The farmer sat at the head of one, consisting of some of his neighbours and all his work-people. At the other sat his wife, with two long benches on each side of her. On these benches sat all the old and infirm poor, especially those who lived in the workhouse, and had no day of festivity to look forward to in the whole year but this. On the grass, in the court, sat the children of his labourers and of the other poor, whose employment it had been to gather flowers and dress and adorn the horns of the ram. His own children stood by the table and he gave them plenty of pudding, which they carried to the children of the poor, with a little draught of cider to every one. The farmer, who never sat down without begging a blessing on his meal, did it with suitable solemnity on the present joyful occasion.'

Here is a similar account, written by Richard Cobbold in 1845, of a 'harvest home' feast on a Suffolk farm at the end of the eighteenth century. The author, when a boy, had many times been present at such scenes. Margaret Catchpole, the heroine of the story, is at this time general servant at the Priory Farm :

'The last day of September came, and with it all the bustle and pleasure of harvest home. No small share of work fell to Margaret's hands, who had to prepare the harvest supper for fourteen men, besides women and children.

'At that time, all the single men lodged in the master's house, and were expected to conform to all the rules, regulations, hours and work, of a well regulated family.

'Once in a year, the good farmer invited the married men, with their wives and families, to supper, and this supper was always the Harvest Home. This was the day on which the last load of corn was conveyed into the barn or stackyard, covered with green boughs, with shouting, and blowing of the merry harvest horn.'

Bloomfield, the Northamptonshire poet and peasant, pictures very charmingly this old custom. On the top of the last load from the harvest field rode the prettiest girl among the reapers.

Home came the jovial Hockey load,
Last of the whole year's crop ;
And Grace among the green boughs rode,
Right plump upon the top.
This way and that the waggon reeled,
And never Queen rode higher.
Her cheeks were coloured in the field
And ours before the fire.

'All the labourers upon the Priory Farm' (continues Cobbold) 'were assembled at six o'clock in the evening ; nine married men and five single ones ; the wives and those children who were old enough to come to the feast, together with the boys, four in number, who had to work upon the land.

'Margaret received great assistance from some of the married women. One pair of hands could not, indeed, have prepared sufficient eatables for such a party—smoking puddings, plain and plum, piles of hot potatoes, cabbages, turnips, carrots, and every species of vegetable which the farmer's lands could produce—beef, roast and boiled, mutton, veal and pork, everything good and substantial ; a rich custard, and apple pies, to which the children did ample justice, for all were seated round this well-furnished table in the old kitchen, celebrated for its curious roof and antique chimneypiece.

'The lord of the feast, or head man in the harvest field, took his station at the head of the table, whilst the master of the house, and his wife, his sister and even his daughter, were the servants of the feast, and took every pains to gratify and satisfy the party.

'After the feast, and a flowing jug or two of brown ale had been emptied, the wives and children were invited into the best parlour to tea and cakes, whilst the merry reapers were left to themselves to enjoy in their own way the stronger harvest ale, which was just broached by the hand of their master.'

The farmer's or labourer's wife was responsible for the family's clothing. In the days before the introduction of cotton from India and America, and before the invention of machinery, homespun was the regular wear in the country. Wool, clipped possibly from her own sheep, would be washed, carded, dyed, and spun by the housewife. The dyes she would prepare herself from lichens, herbs, and the bark of certain trees. She would knit the yarn into stockings or weave it into homespun. Sometimes she would spin flax, and weave the thread into sheets and smocks.

> Come, village Nymphs, ye Matrons, and ye Maids !
> Receive the soft material ; with soft step
> Whether ye turn around the spacious wheel,
> Or, patient sitting, that[1] revolve which forms
> A narrower circle. On the brittle work
> Point your quick eye, and let the hand assist
> To guide and stretch the gently-lessening thread ;
> Even, unknotted, twine will praise your skill.
> There are, to speed their labour, who prefer
> Wheels double spol'd, which yield to either hand
> A sev'ral line ; and many yet adhere
> To th' ancient distaff, at the bosom fix'd,
> Casting the whirling spindle as they walk :
> At home, or in the sheepfold, or the mart,
> Alike the work proceeds.

So sang (a trifle harshly) an eighteenth-century poet at a time when spinning was perhaps the most important of all the multifarious duties which fell to the lot of housekeeping women.

Then the lighting of the cottage or farmhouse gave her some employment. Candles and rushlights rather than oil lamps were at this time used in the country, and these were made at home. William Cobbett, of whom we shall speak later, gives the following account of the

[1] The spindle.

MARGARET CATCHPOLE

rom a drawing by Richard Cobbold, who wrote her story

The 'Hockey Load'

'Home came the jovial Hockey load,
Last of the whole year's crop;
And Grace among the green boughs rode,
Right plump upon the top.'
Bloomfield

Reproduced by the courtesy of the editor of 'The Connoisseur

way in which rushlights were made. Writing in 1830, he says:

'My grandmother, who lived to be nearly ninety, used to get the meadow rushes . . . when they were green. You cut off both ends of the rush and leave the prime part which may be about a foot and a half long. Then you take off all the green skin. . . . The rushes being prepared the grease is melted. The rushes are put into the grease, soaked in it sufficiently, then taken out and laid in a bit of bark.

'The rushes are carried about in the hand, but to sit by, to work by, or to go to bed by they are fixed in stands made for the purpose. Some high, to stand on the ground, and some low, to stand on a table. Now these rushes give a better light than a common small dip candle, and they cost next to nothing. You may do any sort of work by this light.'

In districts where tall rushes were plentiful, they were gathered, dried, and plaited into hats, bonnets, and baskets.

The housewife had duties out of doors as well as in. In summer she would chop, dry, stack, and store wood, bark, peat, and turf for winter's use. She would care for the poultry, feed the animals, work in the garden, help with the milking, and sometimes earn a day's wages herself by weeding, harvesting, or haymaking.

Her children would be kept nearly as busy. Unless they were sent to a charity school of the type we have described, they got little education. When quite young they would be set to scare the birds from fields and orchards. They would be sent on to the common lands to mind the cattle and poultry, and to gather fuel. At harvest time they would follow the reapers and glean the ears of corn which were dropped. As they grew older the girls often went into domestic service and the boys became farm labourers, living on their master's farms till they were old enough, and had saved wages enough, to

The Fuel Gatherers

Engraved in mezzotint by Henry Birche after Gainsborough

marry and settle down in a cottage or on a farm of their own.

Such was the life of a country housewife until about the year 1760. But between that date and the end of the century many changes for the worse took place. First, owing to the invention of machinery and to other causes which we shall describe in a later chapter, many necessaries of life, such as clothes, boots, furniture, household utensils, farm tools, which up to this time had been made by hand in the villages, came to be made by machinery in factories. Large towns grew up, offering prospects of employment at higher wages, and many of the best country workers migrated to them. Secondly, there broke out in 1790 the war between France and England which lasted, with intervals, till 1815. During this time many of the strongest and sturdiest labourers left their 'poor plough to go ploughing the deep' or went soldiering. Corn and other country products rose in price, but labourers' wages were not increased to anything like the same extent. Thirdly, common land was 'enclosed'. Certain great landlords in many districts called Parliament's attention to the fact that the common lands were left waste or being badly cultivated and that they would be more profitable, especially in time of war, if thrown into large farms and scientifically cultivated. They pointed out also that in places they were being used by settlers who were newly come into the district and did not really possess the ancient common rights. So Parliament passed Acts allowing such landlords to enclose the commons within their own estates. Those villagers who could prove their common rights, and from whom such rights were taken, were granted in exchange either a sum of money or a strip of land as an allotment. But in neither case was the award worth what they had lost.

THE

LANCASHIRE

Emigrant's

Farewell.

Farewell parents, we must leave you
And cross the briney ocean wide,
At home midst hunger and starvation,
No longer here we can abide.
Dear parents it is hard to leave you,
Depression drives up far away,
Wipe your griefworn cheek dear mother,
Leave of weeping, now we pray.

May God now comfort you at home,
Pray for us while on the deep.
Adieu, adieu, to you dear father,
Dry up your tears and do not weep.
Oh, oh, how hard it is to part,
From our friends we love so dear
Poverty swells within our dwellings,
What has thou come to Lancashire.

Farewell brother, farewell sister,
We leave you on your native shore,
Farewell father, farewell mother,
Perhaps we ne'er shall see you more;
One kiss from you friends and relations,
We have not long with you to stay,
Our vessel spreads her swelling sails,
To bear us to a foreign land.

See the vessel weighs her anchor,
We from old England now must part,
To see our friends and parents crying,
It would rend the stoutest heart.
But when the vessel was in motion,
Loud shouts from shore did say farewell,
To see our weeping friends and parents,
Would make your bosom heave and swell.

The beginnings of emigration

A nineteenth-century broadside

On the other hand, those who had hitherto used the commons, but could prove no common rights, received no compensation at all.

This last change was by far the most serious of the three. It meant that many small farmers and cottagers lost at one blow their strip of land, their right to cut fuel, and their right to keep animals on the common. Their supplies of home-grown meat, bacon, poultry, milk, cheese, and butter were cut off. All their food had to be paid for at rising prices. They could no longer work on their own land ; they had to hire themselves out as day labourers to those who had enclosed their lands, and to depend upon their wages for the support of their families. Such employment became difficult to obtain, for the new large farms could be run with fewer hands than had previously worked them. This again meant that the large farms paid better than the smaller ones, and such small farmers as remained were ruined.

These changes affected every side of the country housewife's life. In the first place, they affected housing itself. A family which now depended entirely upon wages for its support could not afford to pay high rent ; it sought for as small and cheap a cottage as possible. On the other hand, the landowner had now more cottages on his estate than were needed for the labourers required to work his farm. So, in the case of the superfluous cottages, he raised the rents to a height which compelled the tenants to leave, allowed the cottages to fall into disrepair, and then pulled them down, or even made them into cattlesheds. This meant that there sprang up, on roadside wastes all over the country, wretched mud huts where the evicted cottagers found shelter.

Food and clothing had now to be paid for entirely out of wages. (The potato patch, the home wool clip,

even the old gleaning rights were gone.) The necessities of life were therefore of the plainest and poorest possible quality. But, even so, the housewife could not make both

CHEAP DAYS CONTINUED.

No. 89, Pall Mall.

DYDE and SCRIBE reſpectfully inform the Ladies their CHEAP DAYS will continue about a Fortnight longer, in order to diſpoſe of all ſuch Goods that are left on hand from the Spring Sale, that are a little tumbled or otherwiſe damaged, in order to make room for a freſh Stock next year.

The Goods conſiſt of ſeveral thouſand pieces of plain and figured Ribbon, from 2½ to 6d per yard; ditto of Saſh Ribbon, from 6d. to 2s —ſeveral thouſand yards of Valenciennes and Liſle Thread Laces and Edgings; Black, and Blond Laces and Edgings; black Blond and Thread Veils; Silk and Cotton Stockings; Embroidered Lawn and Silk Handkerchiefs and Dreſſes; coloured Silk Handkerchiefs, of all widths; French Lawns and Cambrics; a variety of Silks for Dreſſes, ſeveral thouſand yards of plain and figured Muſlins for dreſſes, among which are ſome beautiful new patterns and at very low prices. Muſlin Handkerchiefs with Fancy coloured Borders. Black Modes and Sattins for Cloaks; Furr Muffs and Tippets; a large quantity of patent and other Hats from 1s. upwards. Gloves, Feathers, Flowers and a very large quantity of Fans, from 2½ to 21s. Green Garden Fans, for 1s. each.

A large aſſortment of French Perfumery, conſiſting of all kinds of high ſcented Powders and Pomatums, Scented Waters, and a variety of French and Engliſh Jewellery; conſiſting of very faſhionable Ear-rings, 1s. per pair; very beautiful gold ones at 2rs. Glaſs, gilt, and gold Necklaces, Watch Chains, Rings, Tooth pick-caſes, Snuff Boxes, &c. and a thouſand other articles, all which will be ſold (though bought at and imported from the firſt markets) very much under the coſt.

A variety of elegant Millinery, among which are ſome very handſome Muſlin and Gauze Cloaks, 10s. 6d. each. New Straw Hats and Bonnets trimmed in the moſt faſhionable manner, 10s. 6d.

Ladies will find this to be the beſt opportunity they ever met with, to purchaſe goods to take with them into the Country to execute commiſſions for their friends, &c.

A milliner's sale of the beginning of the century

ends meet. Her children were sent to seek work in the towns or to join the army. She herself was driven to supplement her husband's income by seeking work as a day labourer, but this competition between men and women only

brought wages lower still. Meanwhile the owners of big estates, who had made fortunes out of the high price of corn, took to setting aside tracts of land for game preserving. This meant that less was being cultivated, fewer workers were needed, food became scarcer, and prices rose higher than before.

In 1795, and again in 1816, occurred what were known as housewives' riots. Countrywomen in many districts, angry at the high price of food, held up wagons full of provisions on their way to markets and to the towns, and compelled the owners to sell the goods at lower rates. But this was an attempt to 'dam the current' which could make very little real difference.

Many labourers' families were forced to apply to the Poor Houses for relief, with the result, of course, that rates of relief were lowered. But in 1795 the unwise plan was tried of making up a labourer's wages to a fixed sum out of the rates, and this meant that the large farmers who had already been paying unfairly low wages paid less still, leaving it to the parish officer to pay the difference. On the whole, poor law relief did more harm than good.

In the year 1795 a writer named Sir Frederick Eden sent letters to all parts of the country asking for information about the state of affairs in country districts. The replies which he received were published in three large volumes, and concern mainly the wages paid to country labourers, the food they eat, the clothes they wear, and the prices which they have to pay for these.

Eden says that in 1795 workers in country districts round London almost always bought their clothes second hand, but in the North of England and in Scotland they had not lost the habit of spinning. They would buy wool and flax if they had none of their own, spin it into

yarn, and send it to the dyers and weavers to be made into cloth.

'The usual price of a hat worn by labourers', writes Eden, 'is about 2*s.* 6*d.* A coat purchased (4 yards) costs about 2*s.* 6*d.* a yard. A waistcoat takes a yard and a half. A pair of leather breeches costs 3*s.* 6*d.*; labourers sometimes wear breeches of flannel or coloured cotton. A tailor charges 3*s.* for making a whole suit. A linen shirt takes $3\frac{1}{4}$ yds. at 17*d.* a yard; this is strong and wears well. About 11 oz. of wool at 8*d.* the lb. will make a pair of stockings. They are almost invariably spun and knit at home.

'Women's dress generally consists of a black stuff hat of the price of 1*s.* 8*d.* A linen bed gown (stamped with blue) mostly of the home manufacture; this usually costs in the shops about 5*s.* 6*d.*; a cotton or linen neckcloth, price about 1*s.* 6*d.*, two petticoats of flannel, the upper one dyed blue; value of the two about 11*s.* 6*d.*; coarse woollen stockings, home manufacture, value about 1*s.* 8*d.*; linen shift, home manufacture, $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards @ 1*s.* 3*d.* the yard. Women generally wear stays, or rather boddices of various prices. Their gowns are sometimes made of woollen stuff, 6 yards @ 1*s.* 6*d.* the yard. The women, however, generally wear black silk hats, and cotton gowns, on Sundays and holidays.'

The following, says Eden, are some of the prices charged in a shop near London:

	s.	*d.*
A common stuff gown	6	6
Linsey-woolsey petticoat	4	6
A shift (chemise)	3	8
A pair of shoes	3	9
Coarse apron	1	0
Check apron	2	0
Pair stockings	1	6
Hat (the cheapest sort; will last two years)	1	8
Coloured neckerchief	1	0
A common cap		10
Cheapest kind of cloak (will last two years)	4	6
Pair of stays (will last six years)	6	0

Eden found that labourers were living almost entirely on rye or barley bread or potatoes, with strong tea instead of beer, and whey and water instead of milk. Fuel was so dear that labourers could no longer afford to make bread or even to cook their own Sunday dinner, but had to take it to the village baker's. Meat they never ate except on Sundays, and rarely then.

Arthur Young, another writer on country life about this time and an early friend of Fanny Burney's, gets very angry about the poor man's cup of tea.

'Tea drinking', says Young, 'impoverished the poor . . . this single article cost numerous families more than sufficient to remove their real distresses, which they will submit to rather than lay aside their tea. And an object, seemingly, of little account but in reality of infinite importance, is the custom, coming in, of men making tea an article of their food, almost as much as women. If the men come to lose as much of their time at tea as the women, and injure their health by so bad a beverage, the poor, in general, will find themselves far more distressed than ever. There is no clearer fact than that two persons drinking tea once a day amounts, in a year, to a fourth of the price of all the wheat consumed by a family of five persons ; twice a day is half ; so that those who leave off two tea drinking can afford to eat wheat at double the price (calculated at six shillings a bushel).'

Tea of course was expensive (16*s.* a pound [1] in 1781) and since Young calculates that the average wage paid to country labourers in the South of England was about 8*s.* 8*d.*, perhaps he was wise to condemn tea drinking. One remembers how Garrick grumbled at Peg Woffington for her extravagance in making his tea so strong. With

[1] It was even more expensive at the beginning of the century. 'Mr. Fary's 16*s.* Bohee Tea, not much inferior in goodness to the best Foreign Bohee Tea, is sold by himself only at the Bell in Gracechurch Street. Note,—the best Foreign Bohee is worth 30*s.* a pound.' So runs an advertisement in the *Tatler* of the 10th October 1710.

The Tea-table in the reign of Queen Anne

No. 1555 in the B.M. Catalogue of Satirical Prints

the rich, tea drinking was a social function and a happy occasion (so said the critics) for scandal-mongering.

Eden says of wages that a woman could earn about 6*s*. a week in a home industry such as lace-making, or 3*s*. by spinning, but most of these home industries had been, as we shall see, killed by the factories. At farmwork a woman was paid about sixpence a day for hay-making, weeding, or picking stones. These wages seem low, but, on the other hand, the price of food, though high for those times, would seem low to us. Bacon, for example, cost about 10*d*. per lb., cheese about 6*d*., butter 10*d*., meat 5*d*. But these prices were, roughly speaking, twice what they had been twenty years earlier. Some women stood out against the prevailing distress, striving, at all costs, to keep their family together to avoid taking parish help. Of such women we unfortunately know very little. They did not keep diaries or write letters, for many of them had no education and very little spare time. But the story of one of them has been preserved in Sir Frederick Eden's book, and will be told shortly here.

'Anne Hurst was the daughter of a day labourer. She was born at a cottage in Surrey, where she and her parents lived much as did Pamela with hers. Her parents could not afford to keep her at home, so when she was old enough she, like Pamela, was sent into service. While in service she made friends with James Strudwick, another day labourer, and before she was twenty she married him. They set up house in a cottage. For sixty years James went regularly to work on the same farm, earning always a shilling a day. Anne had seven children, of whom six were daughters. All the daughters married, and all their children became day labourers like their father.

'Till 1787 Anne kept the house going, and her family clothed and fed on her husband's 7*s*. a week. In that year James died, and for the next seven years, until she too died at between seventy and eighty years old, Anne lived alone. The only money she earned was got by weeding in a gentleman's garden, probably for

Belch High Street. Borough. — 1804

London shop interiors at the beginning of the nineteenth century

Reproduced by the courtesy of the editor of 'The Connoisseur'

about 6*d.* a day. Besides this we know of a friend who allowed her 20*s.* a year. Poor as she must have known she was going to be, she insisted on her husband receiving a decent burial, including handles to his coffin and a plate with his name and age engraved upon it. She never accepted a penny from the parish, and in her last years her great dread was lest she should come to do so in the end, lest she should have to be buried at the parish's expense. So careful was she with money that she scolded one of her sons-in-law severely for drinking a pot of beer at the alehouse on Saturday night. Her own husband, she said, had never spent five shillings in such a way in his life ! Unfortunately this life of saving and scraping and semi-starvation had its effect on Anne's character. She became proud, bitter, peevish and miserly.'

One can understand that; yet another poor woman, whose circumstances were infinitely more miserable than Anne Hurst's, contrived, incredible as it may appear, to remain contented with her lot, or rather, her little.

'This poor creature [I quote from an account written after her death and very fittingly called " Happy Misery "] died the 1st of December, 1808. She was blind from her sixth year, and had to maintain herself from very early life, which she was able to do [like Anne Hurst] without any assistance from the parish. The little cottage in which she lived was her own ; she had beside about fifteen pounds, for which she received some little interest ; but this was not sufficient even to buy her fuel, so that it was her own earnings which supported her. Her employment was that of spinning silk. By constantly labouring from Monday until Saturday, excepting the few moments which her meals required, she earned one shilling a week. On this she contrived to live. Two shillings a year was all she laid out in flour. Clap-bread, which is made of oatmeal and water, was the chief article of her support. This is rolled into thin cakes, and baked on a stone over the fire, which poor Ellen performed without any help, making at once enough to serve her three or four weeks. A halfpenny worth of milk served her for breakfast, and potatoes were her common dinner. Some of the neighbours gave her a little butter-milk ; of this she made porridge, thickened with clap-bread, which was her usual supper. An ounce of tea served her for six weeks

[would not Arthur Young have delighted in this old woman ?], as she seldom allowed herself to taste it but when she was washing. She never bought any meat, except a small piece of beef against Christmas. When she had neither bread nor potatoes for dinner, she made broth of an onion and a little pepper and salt ; she then prayed to God that she might think it good, and she did think so.

'At one time, all her little stock was fourpence. Her wheel wanted mending, which would cost three halfpence, and threepence she had to pay the poor woman who brought her turf. She did not make known her wants, nor ask for anything, but the woman on being paid for bringing her fuel, returned her a halfpenny, which was the only instance in which she had done so, although she had brought it sixteen years.'

This gift Ellen used to speak of as an instance of the goodness of Providence. Clearly the care of old Ellen did not put Providence to any great expense, although to the halfpenny spoken of above should be added the sum of two guineas a year which the parish authorities paid to her for taking charge of a mad woman who suffered from fits. To put a blind woman in charge of an epileptic seems a rather curious example of the goodness of Providence, and especially since Ellen found it quite impossible to clothe and feed her patient on tenpence a week, but at the end of nineteen years the providential death of the mad woman set Ellen free to enjoy life again.

Hannah More, writing in 1800, gives a slightly less dismal picture of the state of affairs in Somerset, but even her account is not rosy. One of her stories, *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, describes the life of a particularly god-fearing and contented shepherd's family. The writer of the story is supposed to meet the shepherd on the plain, and in course of conversation the shepherd says :

'I have a wife and eight children whom I bred up in that little cottage which you see under the hill, about half a mile off. The house is very well, Sir, and if the rain did not sometimes beat down upon us through the thatch when we are abed I should not

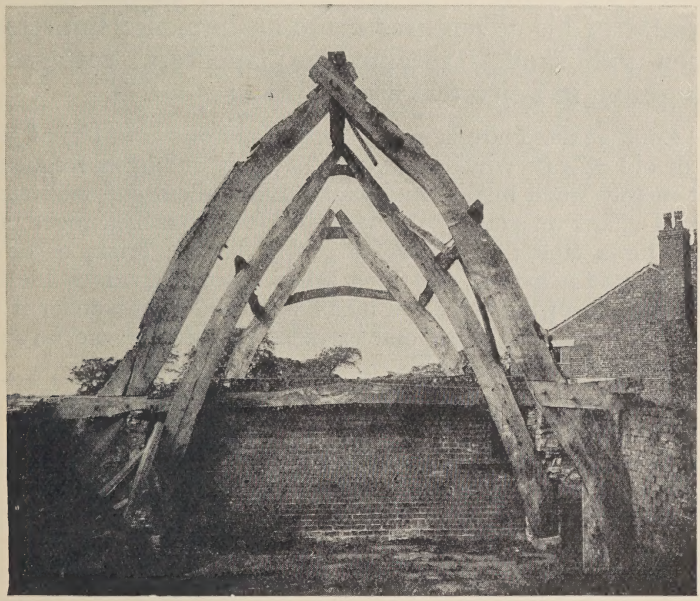
desire a better. I get my shilling a day, and most of my children will soon be able to earn something, for we have only three under five years old. Though my wife is not able to do any out of door work, yet she breeds up her children to such habits of industry that our little maids, before they are six years old, can first get a half-penny, and then a penny a day, by knitting. The boys, who are too little to do hard work, get a trifle by keeping the birds off the corn, and for this the farmers will give them a penny or twopence, and now and then a bit of bread and cheese into the bargain. When the season of crowkeeping is over, then they glean or pick stones. My young ones, who are too little to do much work, sometimes wander at odd hours over the hills, for the chance of finding what little wool the sheep may drop when they rub themselves against the bushes. They carry this wool home, and when they have got a pretty parcel together their mother cards it. The biggest girl then spins it, it does very well for us without dyeing. After this our little boys knit it for themselves while they are employed in keeping cows in the field and after they get home at night. As for the knitting, which the girls and their mother do, that is chiefly for sale, which helps us pay our rent.'

Later on in the story the writer pays a visit to the shepherd at his cottage. Looking through the open door, he sees :

'The shepherd, his wife and their numerous young family drawing round their little table, which was covered with a clean tho' very coarse cloth. There stood on it a large dish of potatoes, a brown pitcher and a piece of coarse loaf. The trenchers on which they were eating were almost as white as their linen. The furniture consisted of four brown wooden chairs, which by constant rubbing were become as bright as a looking glass, an iron pot and kettle ; a poor old grate which scarcely held a handful of coal. Over the chimney stood an old-fashioned broad bright candlestick and a still brighter spit. An old carved elbow chair and a chest of the same date stood in the corner, having been in this family for three generations The large old Bible lay on the window seat, neatly covered with brown cloth, variously patched.'

Conditions remained more or less as Sir Frederick

Eden and Hannah More describe them until 1815. In that year the great war with France ended and there followed a long period of trade depression and unemployment, during which the condition of the country labourer, as indeed of all the labouring people in England, grew



The frame of a wattle and daub house of a labourer

steadily worse. A vivid picture of the state of affairs in 1830 has been given us by William Cobbett in his *Rural Rides*. Cobbett was a famous writer, politician, and speaker. He had been brought up in the country himself and longed for nothing so much as to see its old prosperity restored. He thoroughly understood country ways, and hated towns and factories. In 1830 he travelled on horseback through England on a tour of investigation.

On reaching each village he would put his horse up at the inn, talk to the innkeeper, visit the church, gossip with local farmers, sometimes entertain them to dinner, and end up by addressing a meeting of villagers. He also stopped at cottages along the roads to talk to the country-women about the things we have been discussing. His account of his adventures made an immense impression when published. Speaking of labourers' cottages at Knighton, in Leicestershire, he says :

'Look at these hovels, made of mud and of straw, bits of glass, or of old off-cast windows, without frames or hinges frequently, but merely stuck in the mud wall. Enter them and look at the bits of chairs or stools ; the wretched boards tacked together to serve for a table ; the floor of pebble, broken brick, or of the bare ground ; look at the thing called a bed and survey the rags on the backs of the wretched inhabitants, and then wonder if you can that a standing army and barracks are become the favourite establishments of England.'

Of Cricklade, in Wiltshire, he writes :

'The labourers seem miserably poor. Their dwellings are little better than pigbeds, and their looks indicate that their food is not nearly equal to that of a pig. Their wretched hovels are stuck upon little bits of ground on the road side, where the space has been wider than the road demanded. It seems as if they had been swept off the fields by a hurricane, and had dropped and found shelter under the banks on the roadside. Yesterday morning was a sharp frost, and this had set the poor creatures to digging up their little plats of potatoes. In my whole life I never saw human wretchedness equal to this.'

And of Marlborough he says :

'The labourers along here seem very poor indeed . . . a group of women labourers, who were attending the measurers to measure their reaping work, presented such an assemblage of rags as I never saw before. . . . There were some very pretty girls, but as ragged as colts and as pale as ashes. The day was cold, too, and frost

SIGNS OF THE TIMES!

Two parishes in Shropshire are taxed for the poor at the rate of 16s. 8d. in the pound, and all the lands in the parish are taxed as high as 30s. per acre! It appears that the poor of the whole county of Cardigan, as well as a great part of the adjacent county, have been without fuel during the whole winter, in consequence of the inclement weather of the last autumn having destroyed their provision of turf!

Nothing can be more decisive of the state of the country, than the diminished consumption of the leading articles subject to the duties of excise. The falling off has been progressive during the present quarter. It is stated to be upwards of £600,000.

A parliamentary document, lately laid before the House of Commons, shows the produce of the assessed taxes for the year ending the 5th of January last, to be less than that of the preceding year by four hundred and thirty-one thousand six hundred and sixty-seven pounds. Under every one of the heads of charge, from which the total is made up, there is a deficiency. The total of these charges for the year ending January 5, 1815, was £6,414,641; —more by six hundred and twenty-eight thousand three hundred and eighteen pounds than that of the year now concluded.

Tea.—By a statement in the *Times* newspaper, we learn, that in the two last years there had been a falling off in the consumption of tea, in Great Britain, of above four millions of pounds, and consequently in the *ad valorem* duties of about one million one hundred thousand pounds.

On Wednesday se'ennight, an inquest was held at the Mitre, Broadwall, on the body of C. Fowler, a tailor, but who had been out of work most part of the winter; and since last Christmas his parish allowed him 3s. per week, which was the sole support of his wife and two children. The week preceding his death, his wife was brought to bed, and the parish increased his pension on that account to 7s. which he went to receive on Monday se'ennight; but was so weak, that a woman who attended his wife in her lying-in, went out of humanity with him to the workhouse, and having received the money, they were returning home, when he dropped down in Gravel-lane, and expired on the spot. He had a sixpence in his pocket besides what he received as above; and it is remarkable that a difference of opinion existed among the jury, some being for a verdict of—"Starved to death." It was, however, at length decided, in consequence of his having money in his pocket, that he died a natural death! A verdict was accordingly returned—"Died by the visitation of God."

From 'The Liverpool Mercury', April 4, 1817

hardly off the ground ; and their blue arms and lips would have made any heart ache.'

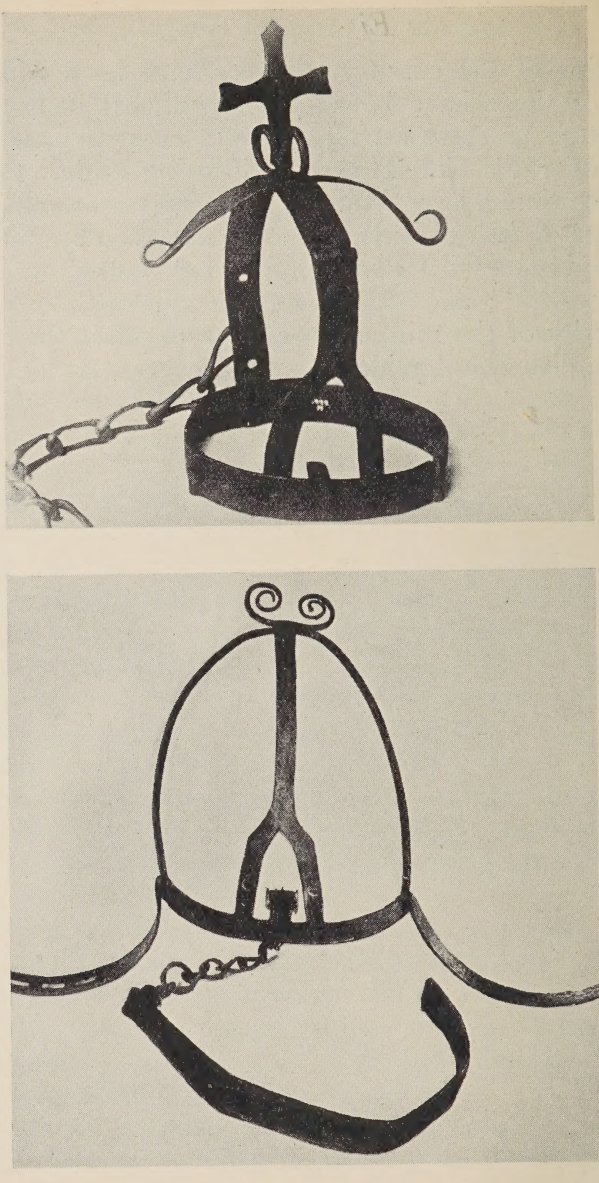
Cobbett was not the only person to remark on these miseries. Emily Shore, a young girl living with her parents at a country vicarage at Potton, in Bedfordshire, kept a diary from 1830 to 1835, in which many similar miseries occurring in her father's parish are described. In 1832, for example, she mentions a man, woman and child who have been turned out of their cottage because they cannot pay their rent and are living under a tent by the roadside, and in 1835 she describes a visit to a family who lived on waste land in a mud cottage built by the man himself. In 1830 we hear of labourers living on roots and sorrel, and of four harvest labourers who were found under a hedge dead of starvation.

What was the remedy for this state of affairs ? In Cobbett's opinion the only hope lay in a return to the conditions which existed before the Enclosure Acts, the Industrial Revolution, and the French War. The old common rights, he says, must be restored. Every cottager must keep his pig and cut his peat on the waste as of old. Village industries must be revived. Plain substantial homespuns must be substituted for the cheap factory-made cottons which make their wearers look ' to-day ladies and to-morrow ragged as sheep with the scab '.

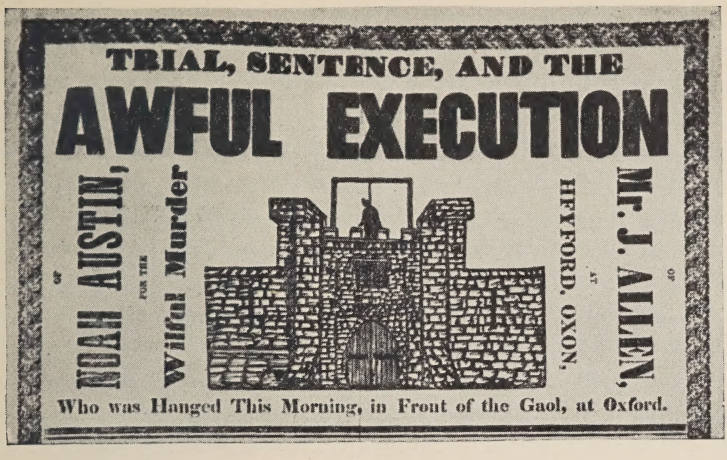
If this is done, says Cobbett, the old days of ' plain manners and plentiful living ' will be restored. The population will flock back to the villages and the great village churches, now empty, will be filled as in the days when the parson ' could not attempt to begin till the rattling of the nailed shoes had ceased '.

But Cobbett did not succeed in putting the clock back. From his time to our own many ways of improving the

condition of the country labourer have been tried, but none of these have been more than partly successful. The story of these attempts would take us beyond the limits of this book. They are still being made. Perhaps a generation wiser than our own may succeed where Cobbett failed. And indeed, succeed they must or England must fail. For no longer are we the ' workshop of the world ' ; and no longer can Englishmen look to the prosperity of the mill and the mine to offset the ruin of the English countryside.



The scold's bridle which, after the seventeenth century, replaced the ducking-stool as a punishment for the minor offences of women. Two examples from Cheshire



VIII

THE WOMAN CRIMINAL

So far we have discussed only women who, whatever their station in life, possessed at least some sort of stake in the world—had either friends to care for, work to do, pleasures to enjoy, or money to live upon. But from the beginning of our period there were also in England women who had none of these things, and it is of such that criminals are largely made. The story of one of these women will show perhaps more clearly than anything else can do the darker side of life during the two centuries with which we are dealing.

In 1722 Daniel Defoe wrote a novel called *Moll Flanders*. Defoe invented part of Moll's story, but there was no need for him to invent her amazing crimes; there were many women worse than Moll Flanders in the London of his day.

If a woman becomes a lawbreaker it is at least fair, before blaming her, to look into her circumstances and early upbringing to see whether these may not have been at least partly responsible. Let us do this for Moll. She never knew her father, she only knew her mother—a poor woman who lived in London in the time of Elizabeth Pepys—in those crowded quarters south of the Thames or east of London Bridge which Samuel rarely visited, and Elizabeth never. This London was very different from the London of Westminster and Whitehall. Many more people lived on a given space of ground than would be allowed to live there to-day. In those parts houses were tiny and built very close together. Streets were so narrow that a horse and cart driven down a side alley would have to come out again backward without turning round. Houses on opposite sides of the road approached so nearly that people could shake hands across the street by leaning out of the upper-storey windows. There were streets into which light and air never penetrated—courts upon which, as it was said, the sun never rose.

There were no scavengers or street sweepers. All waste matter drained, or was thrown into, the narrow streets and lay in pools in the middle of the road or in heaps close to the house door. When the sun shone swarms of flies bred and collected on this garbage ; mice, rats, cats, and dogs fed on it and on each other. When the rain came, ' stinking fish, unwholesome flesh, musty corn and corrupt fruits ' were washed down the streets in an evil-smelling, repulsive-looking flood.

What of the houses themselves ? The interiors were dark ; not only did the narrow streets keep out light and air, but windows were few and small. Glass was too expensive for the poor. Many people used oiled linen stretched across holes in the walls. So that indoors, at

midday, a woman often had to light a candle if she wanted to sew.

No water was laid on in these houses. Many people had to fetch their own supply from the Thames, which acted both as reservoir and as sewer. Hence standards of cleanliness were low. This was true of rich and poor alike. To Samuel Pepys, for example, the idea of washing himself seems to have been new and strange. At any rate he writes in his diary :

'Up and to the office, where busy till noon, my wife being busy in going with her woman to a hothouse to bathe herself, after her long being within doors in the dirt, so that she now pretends to a resolution of being hereafter very clean. How long it will hold I cannot guess.'

And the next night :

'At night late home, and to clean myself with warm water, my wife will have me, because she do herself, and so to bed.'

Yet Pepys was a prosperous and intelligent man, living in a new and comfortable house. It is hardly likely, then, that poor people, living in mean dark streets and tiny inconvenient houses, could keep clean. And, in fact, whenever Mrs. Pepys engaged a maid or a boy from a poor home, we read that she first washed them and gave them a change of clothes to make sure they were free from vermin.

What effect would conditions such as these have upon the minds of those who lived among them ? They could only harden and brutalize. And, in fact, Londoners of Moll Flanders's young days were more cruel, less sensitive, and less humane than people are nowadays. They enjoyed sights which would hardly be tolerated now. They patronized, for example, barbarous sports involving the suffering and death of animals. Cock-fighting was

the commonest of these. Samuel Pepys went at least once to a cock-fight. He describes his first visit as follows :

'Being directed by the sight of bills upon the walls I did go to Shoe Lane to see a cock fighting at a new pit there ; a sport I was never at in my life ; but Lord ! to see the strange variety of people, from Parliament men to the poorest prentices, bakers, brewers, butchers, draymen and what not ; and all these fellows one with another in swearing, cursing and betting. I soon had enough of it, and yet I would not but have seen it once. It is strange to see how people of this poor rank, that look as if they had not bread to put in their mouths, shall bet £3 or £4 at one bet, and lose it, and yet bet as much the next battle (so they call every match of two cocks) so that one of them will lose £10 or £20 at a meeting.'

A friend of Pepys, John Evelyn, a gentle and humane man for those times, had a similar experience. On the 16th June 1670, he wrote in his journal :

'I went with some friends to ye Bear Garden, where was cockfighting, bear, dogfighting, bear and bull baiting, it being a famous day for all those butcherly sports, or rather barbarous cruelties. The bulls did exceeding well, but the Irish wolf dog exceeded, which was a tall grey hound, a stately creature indeed who beat a cruel mastiff. One of the bulls tossed a dog full into a lady's lap, as she sat in one of ye boxes at a considerable height from the arena. Two poor dogs were killed, and so all ended with the ape on horseback and I most heartily weary of the rude and dirty pastime, which I had not seen, I think, in 20 years before.'

Perhaps nothing shows more clearly the superstition of the times than the belief, common enough even among educated people, in witches and witchcraft. Throughout Pepys's century old women whose only crime was that they were poor and friendless, were liable to be accused and convicted of dealings with the Devil, and might think themselves lucky if they escaped from their persecutors with nothing worse than a 'swimming'.

The evidence on which many poor wretches were tortured and put to death was (to our way of thinking) slight, silly, and improbable.

In or about 1634 a boy called Edmund Robinson saw two greyhounds start a hare in Pendle Forest. To Robinson's surprise the dogs suddenly gave up the chase, and when he was about to encourage them with a switch one of them changed into an old woman, whom the boy recognized as Dame Dickenson, wife to one of his neighbours. The old woman, after swearing the boy to secrecy, transformed the other greyhound into a horse upon which she mounted, setting young Robinson before her, and rode to a barn. Here the boy saw several old women of the neighbourhood, busily conjuring from the upper air roast meat, pats of butter, and jugs of milk. They grinned at him and vanished, rather unkindly taking the food with them. When the boy made his absurd story public, he was taken round the neighbourhood by his father so that he might identify his late acquaintances, which he did so successfully, that near a score of unfortunate wretches were committed to prison.

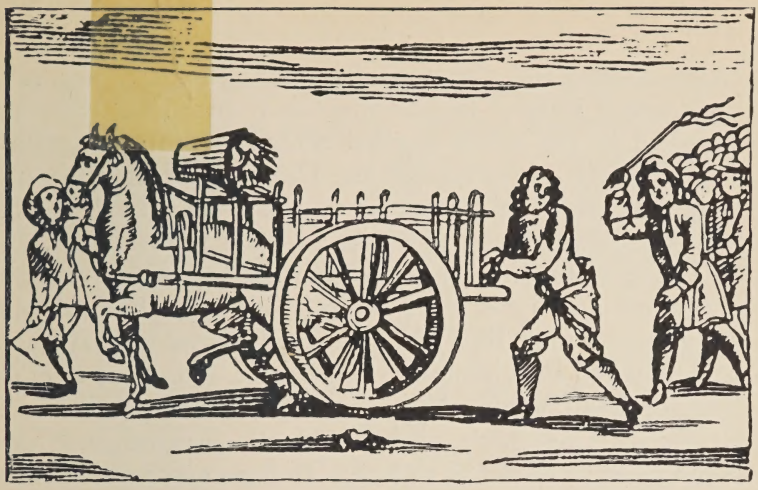
But witch-finding was not left entirely to such inexperienced amateurs as Edmund Robinson of Pendle. During the Civil War one Matthew Hopkins, who described himself as 'Witchfinder General', terrorized old women in the eastern counties by organizing 'witch hunts'. His fee was twenty shillings for each hunt, and for this he undertook to discover the Devil's mark which each witch had on her skin, and to superintend the trial by water. The accused person was stripped naked, and trial was made of any mark or discoloration by plunging a brass-headed nail into the flesh ; if the wound did not bleed, then she was a proven witch. In the trial by water the victim was first trussed by tying the thumbs and

great toes together, placed in a sheet, and then dragged on a rope end through a pond or river. If she sank, she was declared innocent ; if she did not sink, it was because water, being the element of holy baptism, refused to receive her (an explanation suggested by King James the First) and she was then adjudged a witch and put to death. While awaiting trial suspected witches were kept by Hopkins in close confinement, and refused sleep lest their master the Devil should visit and encourage them in dreams. The keepers were instructed to keep a careful look-out for ' imps ', devilish creatures usually in the form of cats or hairy mice, who attended on and aided the witches. Often enough old women, driven half-mad by the brutality of the witch-finders, confessed to manifest absurdities ; one woman, for example, described to her persecutors an imp named ' Nan ', which ' Nan ' turned out to be her favourite pullet.

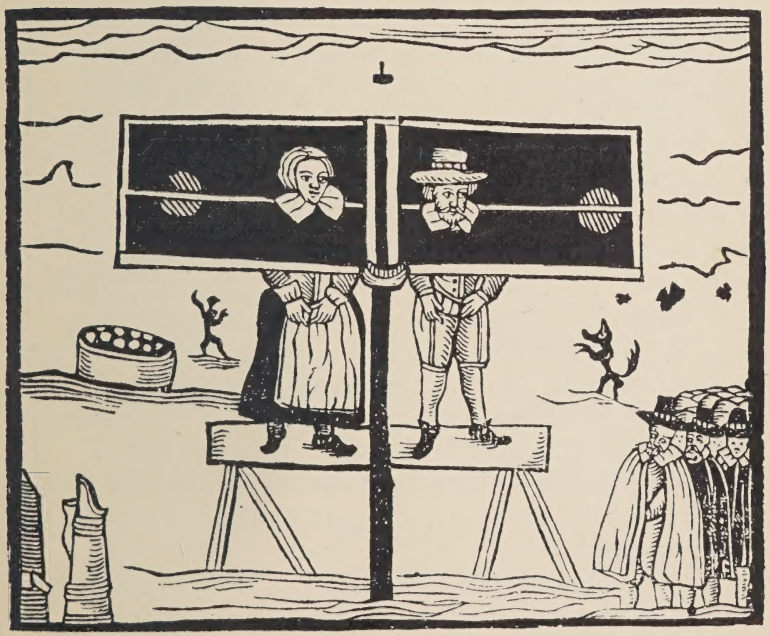
Matthew Hopkins, it is good to know, fell into his own trap. He was put to his own trial by swimming, and discovered to be a wizard. Butler's *Hudibras* mentions him :

> And has he not within a year
> Hang'd threescore of them in one Shire ?
> . . . Some for putting knavish tricks
> Upon green geese or turkey chicks ;
> Or pigs that suddenly deceased
> Of griefs unnatural, as he guess'd
> Who proved himself at length a witch
> And made a rod for his own breech.

As late as 1707 an old woman at Oakley, near to Bedford, suffered the trial by swimming. First she was stripped and searched for pins, because it was believed that a single pin would spoil the efficacy of the trial. She was then dragged through the Ouse, but the test proved



Whipping at the Cart Tail
From Harman's 'Caveat', 1567



Two pretended fortune-tellers in the pillory
From 'The ... Cousnages of Iohn West and Alice West', in the Bodleian

inconclusive, for although her body floated, her head sank under water. So she was taken out of the river and weighed in the scales against a church Bible, because it was felt that no servant of the Devil could possibly outweigh the word of God. As was to be expected, the old woman outweighed the Bible, and she was set free.

These absurdities and brutalities were the work of credulous and ignorant people. But even humane and enlightened men like Sir Thomas Browne and Addison half-believed in witchcraft. *Spectator*, No. 117, tells the story of Moll White, 'a notorious witch'. Moll was in Roger de Coverley's parish and all sorts of imaginary exploits were credited to her. If the dairymaid's butter did not set, it was because Moll was at the bottom of the churn; if a horse sweated in the stable, Moll had been riding it; if the hare escaped from the hounds, the huntsman blamed Moll. Maids who suffered with the nightmare, and children who vomited pins, were thought to be under Moll's spells. It was only Sir Roger's kindness and authority which saved the old woman from a ducking and perhaps worse. Addison's opinion about Moll was 'neuter' as he calls it, although he believed 'in general that there is and has been such a thing as witchcraft . . . an intercourse and commerce with the evil spirits'.

The *Athenian Oracle*, a late seventeenth-century newspaper (1691 to 1697), considered the question of witchcraft at some length in answer to various correspondents whose questions may be summed up as follows:

1. Is it likely that the self-accusations of witches should be 'the effect of dotage, melancholy, or a disturbed imagination'?

2. If witchcraft be true how can it be explained, and particularly how can 'imps' be accounted for?

Witch Finding

From 'The Discovery of Witches, by Matthew Hopkins, Witch-finder', printed at London in 1647

3. Is it lawful to practise the trial by swimming ; and how far is this evidence to be relied upon ?

The *Athenian Oracle* said in reply that self-accusations were clearly a sign of a disordered mind ; but the writer did not wish to be thought ' so incredulous as to believe there is no such thing as a witch in nature '. To the second question a doubtful answer was returned, but the existence of imps was dismissed as an ' imposture and cheat '. The trial by swimming was condemned as a breach of the fifth commandment (which teaches that old age should be reverenced) and the evidence whether of innocence or guilt afforded by such trials was judged to be false and unreasonable.

The acts against witchcraft were not repealed until the reign of George II, and the popular charms against diseases and misfortunes which are still remembered in remote country places are an interesting relic of the powers once ascribed by a superstitious people to the old witches of England.

Some of the love superstitions of our ancestors have been spoken of already in chapter v. Others of a different kind were not quite so harmless. Sick people lay at the mercy of quacks who would physic them with horrible messes compounded of :

' Live Hog Lice, New Gathered Earth Worms, Live Toads, Black tips of Crab's Claws, Frog's livers, and the like.'

Here is a medicine for the cure of the small-pox.

' *Pulvis Aethiopicus*, the Black Powder. R. Live Toads, No. 30 or 40, burn them in a new Pot, to black Cinders or Ashes, and make a fine powder. Dose ℥ss, or more in the Small Pox &c. and is a certain help for such as are ready to die ; some also commend it as a wonderful thing for the cure of the Dropsie.'

Minds of this ignorant, untrained, superstitious type

whether a woman be a Witch
or not.

Printed at London for *Edward Marchant*, and are to
be ſold at his ſhop ouer againſt the Croſſe in Pauls

Witch-finding. Trial by water

The Ducking Stool for Scolds

are the minds which most naturally take to crime, and London in Moll Flanders's day was full of such people. The streets, as we know, were unsafe for women. They swarmed with beggars and cut-throats. Thieving, in particular, was very common ; Pepys gives an account of his wife's experience on one of the few occasions when she went shopping alone :

'So home, and there found my wife come home and seeming to cry, for bringing home in a coach her new ferrandin (poplin) waistcoat, in Cheapside a man asked her whether that was the way to the Tower, and while she was answering him another, on the other side, snatched away her bundle out of her lap, and could not be recovered, but ran away with it, which vexed me cruelly but cannot be helped.'

Shopkeepers exposed their goods in a manner which invited theft ; and shoplifting in Moll Flanders's day was a very considerable branch of the thief's profession and practised by women as well as by men. The perils which honest people ran in the streets are set out very vividly in Gay's *Trivia*, a poem which describes London streets as they were in the days of good Queen Anne, and for long after.

When the mob gathers, swiftly shoot along,
Nor idly mingle in the noisy throng ;
Here dives the skulking thief, with practis'd sleight,
And unfelt fingers make thy pocket light.
Where 's now the watch with all its trinkets ? flown :
And thy late snuff box is no more thy own.
But lo ! his bolder thefts some tradesman spies,
Swift from his prey the scudding lurcher flies ;
Breathless, he stumbling falls. Ill-fated boy !
Why did not honest work thy youth employ ?
Seiz'd by rough hands, he 's dragged amid the rout,
And stretched beneath the pump's incessant spout,
Or, plung'd in miry ponds, he gasping lies,
Mud choaks his mouth, and plasters o'er his eyes.

OLD BAILEY, SEPT. 24.

The following Priſoners received ſentence of death for the following offences:

John Griffiths for horſe-ſtealing.

Elizabeth Hill for ſtealing goods to the value of 21 15s. privately in a ſhop.

Sarah Dancer for the ſame offence.

Thomas Pearſon for a robbery in an open field near the King's highway.

John Spencer for ſheep-ſtealing.

Erick Hanſon Falk for forgery.

John Lewis for unlawfully aſſembling with twenty other perſons and more, to the diſturbance of the public peace, and beginning to demoliſh and to pull down a dwelling-houſe.

The ſame day, at noon, the Seſſions ended at the Old Baily, when the 2 following perſons [*drew blanks, and*] received ſentence of death, viz. John Turner, for breaking into the apartments of Mrs. Turner, who was an inmate of his father's, near Queenhithe, and ſtealing from thence 1 guinea, 5 l. in ſilver, and ſeveral wearing apparel; and Anne Palmer, alias Hinks, for ſtealing 8 l. in money, and goods to the value of 38 s, the property of Mr. Sam. Ruſſel. *C* Five were burnt in the hand, and 30 were caſt for tranſportation. *P* Seven were burnt in the hand, and about 20 ordered for tranſportation. *D P*. Eight were burnt in the hand. *C*.

Crime and its reward. Illustrations of the severity of the penal code. The lower cutting from 'The Grub-street Journal' of 21 October 1731

The crime of Catherine Hayes, the murderess, upon which Thackeray based his grim tale 'Catherine'. Having made her husband drunk, Hayes and her accomplice Billings killed him (1726). The head and then the box containing the dismembered body were found in the Thames. Billings was hanged. Hayes, as the slayer of her husband, in accordance with a barbarous law not repealed till 1790, perished at the stake

We know nowadays, that for crime, as well as for disease, prevention is better than cure. We set more value on our police force and our well-lit streets than on our magistrates and prisons, and we aim in our prisons at reforming criminals as well as punishing them. But in 1660 streets were so dark that people going abroad at night had to employ link boys, as they were called, to carry torches before them. And instead of police there were watchmen—discharged and disabled soldiers—old men upon whom the youths of the town played all sorts of tricks, and who were much more afraid of the criminals than the criminals were of them. For the condemned criminals there were no reformatories, but only brutalizing prisons and heavy penalties. The death penalty was common, even for quite trivial offences. Executions took place in public, and crowds always collected and enjoyed watching them. Women were frequently executed, although sometimes they were able to save themselves by pleading their sex.

'One Anne Green', notes an old Oxford diarist, 'was hang'd in the castle of Oxon. After she had suffer'd the law, she was cut downe, and carried away in order to be anatomiz'd by some young physitians, but they finding life in her, would not venture upon her, only so farr, as to recover her to life. Which being look'd upon as a great wonder there was a relation of her recovery printed.'

When criminals had been executed their bodies were, commonly, exposed on the public bridges before being buried ; highwaymen were left hanging from boughs of trees as a warning to all comers. Yet, far from preventing crime, these brutal methods merely hardened people's hearts, and made them insensible of shame and indifferent to death.

Cruel punishments were common. Criminals were

Women beating hemp in a Bridewell

From Hogarth's 'Harlot's Progress'

whipped in jail, and publicly through the streets. The life of prisoners in jails, such as Newgate, was often described as a hell on earth. A visitor to Newgate in Moll Flanders's day saw women beating hemp, and jailers beating women. Idle and disorderly servants, 'nightwalkers', and vagrants, were herded into 'Houses of Correction' and there whipped and made to work, as was Mary Saxby, whose sad story is given later. John Howard, who made a tour of English prisons in 1779 and wrote his observations afterwards, gave the following account of two of the Birmingham prisons. The first was Peck Lane prison :

'The gaol for this large populous town is called the Dungeon. The court is only about 25′ square. Keeper's House in front, and under it 2 cells down 7 steps. Straw laid on bedsteads. On one side of the court 2 night rooms for women, 8 ft. × 5′ 9″ and some rooms over them ; on the other side the gaoler's stable and one small day room for men and women ; no window. Over it another room or two.

'In this small court, besides the litter from the stable, a stagnant puddle near the sink for the gaoler's ducks. Gaoler's poultry is a very common nuisance but in so scanty a court is intolerable. The whole prison very offensive. Sometimes great numbers confined here. Over 150 prisoners in the winter of 1775.'

And the second was the dungeon in High Street, Bordesley :

'There are two damp dungeons down ten steps, and two rooms over them. There is no water supply. The gaoler receives no salary ; he keeps an ale house. Liquors are introduced by visitors through the windows which face the street. Hence most of the prisoners think their confinement little punishment.'

In Moll Flanders's day it was fatally easy, and indeed tempting to a poor woman, to become a criminal. There were so few ways in which a woman without money, and unmarried, could earn her living honestly. She could

A SELECT and IMPARTIAL

ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIVES, BEHAVIOUR, and DYING WORDS, of the moſt remarkable

CONVICTS,

From the Year 1725, down to the preſent Time.

CONTAINING

Amongſt many Others, the following, *viz.*

Catherine Hayes, for the barbarous Murder of her Husband.

Edward Bunworth, *Wm. Blewit*, and five more, for the Murder of Mr. *Ball*, in St. *George's-Fields*.

James Cluff, for the Murder of his Fellow Servant, *Mary Green*.

John Gow, alias *Smith*, Captain of the Pyrates, for Pyracy and Murder.

Mr. *Maynee*, one of the Clerks of the Bank of *England*, for cheating the Bank of 4420 l.

Mr. *Woodmarſh*, for the Murder of Mr. *Robert Ormes*.

John Sheppard, who made his Eſcape out of the Condemn'd-Hole, and likewiſe out of the Stone-Room in *Newgate*.

Robert Hallam, for the barbarous Murder of his Wife, by throwing her out of Window.

Mr. *Shelton*, the Apothecary, a Highwayman.

Sarah Malcomb, for the barbarous Murder of *Ann Price*, *Eliz. Harriſon*, and *Lydia Duncomb*, in the *Temple*.

John Field, *Joſeph Roſe*, *Wm. Buſh*, and *Humphry Walker*, for entering the Houſe of Mr. *Lawrence*, and Mr. *Francis*.

Fælix quem faciunt aliena Pericula cautum.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

Printed by J. APPLEBEE, for J. HODGES, at the *Looking-Glaſs*, on *London-Bridge*; and ſold alſo by C. CORBETT, at *Addiſon's-Head*, oppoſite St. *Dunſtan's*-Church, in *Fleet-ſtreet*. M,DCC,LX.

nurse ; she could go into domestic service ; she could serve in a shop. All three professions were badly paid, and if one may judge from the number of advertisements for runaway servants in the newspapers of the time, domestic service was hateful to many women.

'Mary Baxter is gone from her Master, and took away from him a quantity of Manchester Goods, such as Thread, Laces, Gartering and Cadis, and sells them Wholesale to shopkeepers and says she lives in Manchester, and makes them there. She is a tall proper Woman of a fresh Complexion, her Hair Dark-Brown, and a Dimple in her Chin. She is supposed now to follow singing of Ballads with some other companions with her, in Markets ; she is very well known about the Country, and formerly used to sit singing on Horseback.'

So runs an advertisement in a newspaper of 1714, and a guinea reward is offered for the taking of Mary Baxter. Such dishonest servants constantly recruited the criminal classes. With better working conditions they might have remained honest, if poor. For most women there were only two alternatives—to strain every nerve to get married, or to live all their life dependent on their parents. A few, like Moll, chose neither, and determined if they could not support themselves by fair means to do so by foul.

But it is time to turn to Moll's own story. She was herself the child of a criminal. Her mother had been found guilty of stealing three pieces of holland from a draper's shop, and sentenced to transportation. She was sent on a convict ship to Virginia—one of England's new colonies across the Atlantic, and there sold as a slave to work on one of the cotton or tobacco plantations. Moll was left as a baby in England, with no parents and no friends. She was taken charge of by the poor-law officers at Colchester, and treated kindly till she was fourteen

years old. She was taught to spin and sew, and could earn 3*d.* a day at spinning, or 4*d.* at needlework. So Defoe tells us she began with the desire to live an honest and self-respecting life. 'Even if I had rags on I would always be clean, or else I would dabble them in the water myself.'

But at fourteen the guardians turned her adrift to earn her own living. She was taken by a lady, who had for a long time been interested in her, to live as companion to her daughters. This meant that Moll learnt dancing, French and music in their company, but got no further preparation for earning her own living. When Moll was about eighteen years old, the eldest son of the house—Robert—made her a dishonest offer. He promised her a hundred guineas a year if she would live to please him, live as his wife in secret, until he inherited his father's estate, when he would marry her. Moll, knowing how difficult it would be to get a husband unless she had money, and not wishing to give up the pleasant kind of life to which she had become accustomed, accepted the offer. But afterwards she found out that Robert had no intention of keeping his promise and marrying her.

This was the beginning of Moll's troubles. She had developed vicious habits, and her faith in the better side of human nature had been destroyed. For years afterwards she roamed the world living with one man after another, making her husband for the time being keep her and give her presents, and getting what money she could out of him. Sometimes in the intervals she lived honestly by her needle, doing 'quilting work for ladies' beds, petticoats and the like', but she earned so little money this way that after a time she always returned to her vicious way of living. Several men she attracted by making them believe she had a large fortune. Some she

found were themselves already married. In the end she was left, at forty-eight years old, penniless and alone, with the remembrance of a lawless life behind her. It was then that she took to theft as a means of living. Here are the words in which she describes her state of mind and what came of it :

' My case was indeed deplorable, for I was left perfectly friendless and helpless. My very apprehensions doubled the misery, for I fancied every sixpence that I paid for a loaf of bread was the last I had in the world, and that to-morrow I was to fast, and be starved to death. O let none read this part without seriously reflecting on the circumstances of a desolate state and how they would grapple with friends and want of bread. One evening, being brought as I may say to the last gasp, doing I did not know what or why, I dressed me and went out. Wandering thus about, I knew not whither, I passed by an apothecary's shop in Leadenhall St., where I saw lie on a stool just before the counter a little bundle wrapt in a white cloth ; beyond it stood a maid servant with her back to it looking up towards the top of the shop. . . . I stepped into the shop and with my back to the wench I put my hand behind me and took the bundle and went off with it. It is impossible to express the horror of my soul all the while I did it.'

It was in this way no doubt that many women at this time were first led into a career of crime.

After the first step the next was easy. The night after her theft Moll ' slept little, the horror of the fact was on my mind, and I knew not what I said or did all night. Perhaps, said I, it may be some poor widow like me that had packed up these goods to go and sell them for herself and a poor child, and are now starving and breaking their hearts for want of that little they would have fetched.' But afterwards her heart gradually hardened—she was tempted again, took a necklace from a little child, then rings from a jeweller's window, then a silver tankard from an inn, then made friends with professional thieves and cut-

Title-page of 'The Cry of the Oppressed, being a True and Tragical Account of the Unparallel'd Sufferings of Multitudes of Poor Imprisoned Debtors, in most of the Gaols of England, under the Tyranny of the Gaolers and other Oppressors, lately Discovered upon the Occasion of this present Act of Grace, for the release of Poor Prisoners for Debt or Damages, some of them being not only Iron'd and Lodg'd with Hogs, Felons and Condemn'd Persons, but have had their Bones Broke, others Poisoned and Starved to Death, others Denied the Common Blessings of Nature, as Water to Drink or Straw to Lodge on, with other Barbarous Cruelties, not to be Parallel'd in any History or Nation, all of which is made out by Undeniable Evidence, together with the Case of the Publisher (Moses Pitt).' 1691.

purses. Finally, when many of these had been caught and Moll alone had escaped, she was one day detected herself in the act of taking a bundle of flowered silk from a mercer's shop and carried to Newgate prison.

Newgate in Moll's time was far too dreadful a place to be described here—much worse, probably, than anything we know or can imagine. One effect it seems to have had upon every criminal who was sent there. It killed every spark of goodness and confirmed them in wickedness for ever afterwards. Moll says, ' 'tis impossible to describe the terror of my mind when I was first brought in and when I looked round upon all the horrors of that dismal place '. Every criminal, she says, feels like this, but ' time, necessity and conversing with the wretches that are there, familiarizes the place to them, until at last they become reconciled to that which at first was the greatest dread upon their spirits in the world, and are as impudently cheerful and merry in their misery as they were when out of it.' As for Moll herself : ' I degenerated into stone ; I turned first stupid and senseless, and then brutish and thoughtless, and at last raving mad as any of them.'

Moll was condemned to death—' a sentence to me like death itself which confounded me ; I had no more spirit left in me ; I had no tongue to speak, or eyes to look up, either to God or man.'

Twelve days later the warrant for her execution arrived at the prison. But from this fate Moll was saved by a pious clergyman—who visited the prison, attempting the kind of work which Elizabeth Fry did for condemned women a hundred years later. He managed to secure for Moll a reprieve ; reawakened her better nature ; urged her to repentance, and finally got her sentence changed to one of transportation.

Moll was taken on board the transport ship, kindly treated by the captain, and in Virginia sold to a planter who set her free almost immediately. In Virginia she found some of her relations, heard that her mother was dead, married, and returned with her husband to England. Her story ends happily,

'We are now grown old, I am come back to England, being almost seventy years of age, my husband sixty-eight, having performed much more than the limited terms of my transportation, and now, notwithstanding all the fatigues and all the miseries we have gone through, we are both in good heart and health. We resolve to spend the remainder of our lives in severe penitence for the wicked lives we have lived.'

We have told only a little piece of Moll's story. Much of it is sadder than anything here written, but that it was more fact than fiction may clearly be seen from the life story of Mary Saxby, a poor vagrant who lived dishonestly but died a pious woman, as did Moll herself. Her story is told in a popular tract written to persuade eighteenth-century working girls to avoid evil-living, the same motive which Defoe pleads for writing Moll Flanders. Mary Saxby's story has the title *Memoirs of Mary Saxby, a Female Vagrant* ; and it purports to be written by herself. The account here is much abbreviated :

'I was born in 1738. My mother dying when I was very young, and my father going into the army, I was exposed to distress even in my infancy. When I was about ten years of age, my father married again ; but the very name of step-mother gave me such disgust, that I could not endure it ; and therefore was not very careful to please her. I ran away, and oh ! what a scene of distress, sorrow, and trouble did I bring myself into by this unguarded action. For several nights that I staid in town I was forced to creep under the bulks to hide myself from the watchmen ; and as soon as day broke, I went into the markets, to pick up rotten apples, or cabbage-stalks, as I had nothing else to support

nature. At length, I went into the country. How I lived, I cannot now remember, but I had nearly perished with cold and hunger. I can recollect sitting in a blacksmith's shop, and holding my feet in my hands, to get some warmth into them. One night, I crept under a hovel for shelter, and there came an old beggar-man to lie down ; seeing a child by herself, he asked me where I came from. I fear I told him some lie, which to my shame, I was very guilty of, though so young. He gave me a piece of bacon, which I ate greedily.

'I now wandered from town to town till I met with a poor travelling woman, who had three daughters : she took pity on me ; she washed, combed, and fed me, and took as much care of me as if I had been her own. Her youngest daughter was about my age. As we both had pretty good voices, we agreed to go about together singing ballads, and to separate from her mother.

'Being left to ourselves, we ran into all sorts of company, singing in ale-houses, and at feasts and fairs, for a few pence and a little drink. At length we met with a gang of gipsies and went to live in their camp for more than a year. I loved a young gipsey, and being made unhappy by him, I determined to escape. I accomplished my design with some difficulty, being narrowly watched.

'I now met with a woman who sung ballads, and she took me into partnership, till we had some words and separated. Soon after this, I joined company with a decent woman, who sold hard-ware. One day, while with her, I was singing, when some sailors fixed their eyes on me, and forced me along with them ; but my cries alarmed a farmer who sent his servants, with dogs, after the sailors ; and by these means I was rescued. Soon afterwards, I happened to attract the notice of some gipsies, who insisted on my going along with them. They lived by Stealing. I escaped from them and got honester employment, in weeding corn. I now became ill and was forced to bow my stubborn spirit, and go to my father, who kindly received and clothed me, and got me into a hospital.

'When cured, I went into Kent to pick hops and from thence into Essex ; where they would not suffer any one to travel without a licence, except they could give a very good account of themselves. I, not knowing the rules of the Country, sung ballads in

A Prison Interior

'Humours of the Fleet', 1749

The London Beggar

From Tempest's 'Cryes of London', 1711

Epping-market. In the course of the day, I became acquainted with a middle-aged woman, who looked like a traveller ;[1] and we went to sleep together at an ale-house. For this I soon Smarted ; as she proved to be a wicked woman, although I did not know it. Being in her company, and having been seen with her in the market, the constable came in the night, obliged us to leave our bed, and secured us till morning ; when we were taken before a justice, who Committed us both to Bridewell, and ordered us to be repeatedly whipped. The keeper[2] heard my story candidly, and observing my youth and inexperience, he pitied me. We were to be confined there six weeks, without any allowance. She was a good spinner ; and he made her work, and gave me half her earnings. As to being whipped, I knew little but the shame of it ; for he took care not to hurt me. As soon as I was set at liberty I returned to my former courses.'

And so between 'gipsying', ballad-singing, and occasional work in the hay-fields, Mary Saxby passes her days, until, in the neighbourhood of Woburn, 'the Lord appeared for me'. From that time onward, her life is less adventurous but rather more respectable.

Other chapters of this book show that, as time went on, it became gradually easier for women to earn an honest living. Happily, too, before our period was finished, the treatment of convicted criminals began to improve. About the middle of the eighteenth century an attempt was made to reclaim women like to Moll Flanders in the Magdalen Hospital, Prescott Street, London. Here penitent outcasts were sheltered, fed, clothed, and put to honest work. From 1758 onwards, this Hospital cared for unhappy women whom nobody else cared for. The way of the penitent was hard. They rose at six in the summer, and worked till one with half an hour for breakfast ; from two till seven they worked again, and went to bed at ten. But at least they were fed and clothed. Noble

[1] We should now say, a tramp.

[2] Of the jail at Epping.

work was done by two people—John Howard and Elizabeth Fry. John Howard, round about 1780, made his tour through the prisons of England and Wales, and published the facts broadcast through England. Elizabeth Fry was a member of a Quaker family. She was born in 1780, and underwent a violent religious conversion at the age of seventeen. Until then she had been a timid, solitary child, but after that time she devoted herself to good works of every kind. In 1813 she paid her first visit to Newgate, and was horrified by what she saw. Things were apparently no better than they had been in Moll Flanders's day. Drink was still smuggled into the prisons ; the jailers were still unpaid, and living on the profits which they made by the sale of drink and by robbing wealthy prisoners ; there was no separate accommodation for men and women. It was not until four years later, however, that Mrs. Fry began to visit the prison regularly, in order to do what she could for the women prisoners. The kind of work she undertook is hinted at in the following extracts from her diary :

ELIZABETH FRY

Feb. 24th, 1817. ' I have lately been much occupied in forming a school in Newgate for the children of the poor prisoners, as well as for the young criminals. This has brought me much peace and satisfaction—but my mind has also been deeply affected by

attending a poor woman who was executed. This morning I visited her twice. This poor creature murdered her baby, and how inexpressibly awful to have her own life taken away! The whole affair has been truly affecting to me to see what poor mortals may be given to.'

March 4th. 'I have just returned from a most melancholy visit to Newgate, where I have been at the request of Elizabeth Fricker, previous to her execution to-morrow morning at 8 o'clock. I found her much flurried, distressed and tormented in mind, her hands cold, and in a universal tremor. However, after a serious time with her, her troubled soul became calmed. But is it not man's place rather to afford poor erring fellow-mortals, whatever may be their offences, an opportunity of proving their repentance by amendment of life?'

April 12th. 'I have found in my late attention to Newgate, a peace and prosperity that I seldom remember before. A way has been opened for us to bring into order the poor prisoners. Already from being wild beasts, they appear harmless and kind.'

The changes which Mrs. Fry brought about are described by a visitor to the prison, who knew it both before and after Mrs. Fry's work there, in the following words:

'I went and asked to see Mrs. Fry, and was conducted by a turnkey to the entrance of the women's wards. On my approach, no loud sounds or angry voices showed I was about to enter a place which had long been known as "Hell above ground". In the courtyard, instead of beings scarcely human blaspheming and fighting, tearing each other's hair, or gaming with a filthy pack of cards for the very clothes they wore, stillness and order reigned. I was conducted by a decently dressed person to the door of a ward, where at the head of a long table sat a Lady belonging to the "Society of Friends". She was reading aloud to about 16 women prisoners engaged in needlework around it. Each wore a clean-looking blue apron and bib, with a numbered ticket suspended from her neck by a red tape. They all rose on my entrance, curtsied respectfully and then at a given signal resumed their work. Instead of a scowl or leer, they wore an air of self-respect and gravity, as if conscious of their improved character.'

The Reformed Prison

From Mahew and Binny's 'The Criminal Prisons of London'

It was not, however, enough that one prison should be improved. Friends who were interested in Mrs. Fry's work brought the whole matter before Parliament, and in 1818 Mrs. Fry gave evidence before a Parliamentary Commission appointed to inquire into the state of prisons generally. The result of this inquiry was that in 1821 a bill was introduced for mitigating the severity of the treatment of women criminals, and from this date conditions in prisons gradually improved. Mrs. Fry next turned her attention to the convict settlements—in Australia at this time, though in America in Moll Flanders's day—to which prisoners sentenced to transportation were sent, and to the ships appointed to carry them there. The two following letters will show the sort of changes which she succeeded in getting carried out :

To Admiral Thomas Martin (Controller of the Navy).

Respected Friend,

Most kindly as thou hast seconded our views, thou hast a little mistaken them. We do not desire indulgences or increased comforts for convicts, except so far as good conduct may deserve it. Some of our prisons we think decidedly too comfortable, and our great wish is, that by employment and instruction in the habits of cleanliness and order, the time of their imprisonment may be a time of reformation and not indulgence. I believe kindness does more in turning them from the error of their ways than harsh treatment, and that there are many who were driven into guilt, and only want the way to be made open, to return with joy into the paths of virtue.

With respect to convict ships, we are of opinion that making such arrangements among the women as tends to their good order and reformation, would make the voyage less tempting to the evil minded and safer to the well-disposed. Surely, for the sake of the colony, the women's morals should be protected on the voyage. It is worth the effort to make even a convict ship a place for industry, instruction and reform.

To the Governor of Tasmania.

Respected Friend,

I take the liberty of stating our views relating to the female convicts in Tasmania.

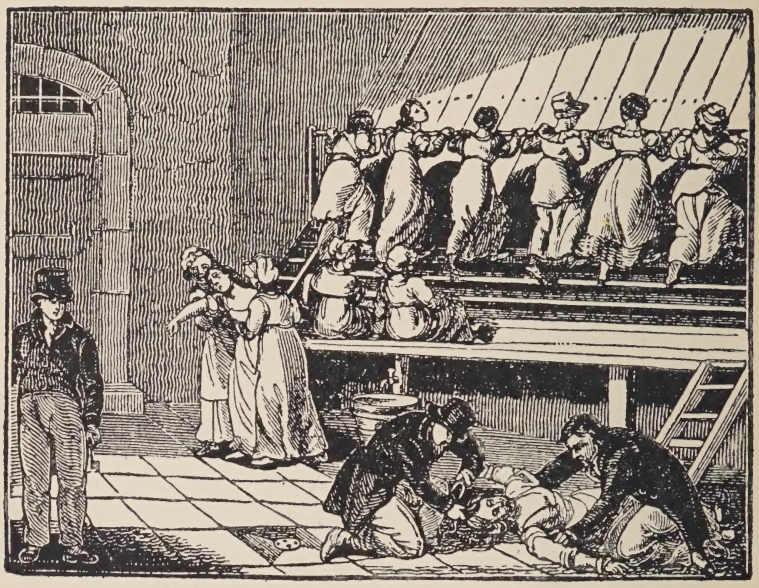
We suggest that a building be erected at Hobart Town for the reception of female convicts. That a respectable matron be there stationed to superintend the whole establishment. That part of the building be appropriated to an adult and girls' school, and that a schoolmistress be selected by the matron, from among the reformed prisoners. That immediately on the arrival of a ship the convicts be quietly conducted from the ship to the building. That those whose conduct has been favourable on board ship be taken into service by the respectable inhabitants. The others to remain confined, receiving suitable instruction and employment, until they amend in character and disposition.

We also suggest that a sufficient supply of strong and decent clothing be provided for them during the voyage, and that on their discharge from prison their own clothing shall be returned to them. We consider it desirable that a matron should be constantly on the ship, especially while it is lying in the Thames, to attend to their clothing and to search their visitors in order that no spirituous liquors, or anything else that is improper be introduced. Could the matron also accompany them during the voyage it would be highly useful.

Believe me to remain,
Thy obliged friend,
Elizabeth Fry.

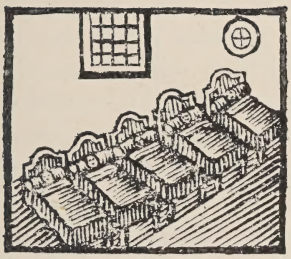
We find, then, that before the end of our period two changes for the better had taken place. Fewer women were being driven to crime by poverty, and conditions in the prisons had been improved. But, on the other hand, the coming of the Industrial Revolution, of which a later chapter will speak, brought about, especially in the large towns, conditions of life which were as hardening and brutalizing for women as were those of Moll Flanders's day. And it was not until after Elizabeth Fry's time

that the brutal punishments (and particularly the death penalty for theft), of which we have given illustrations on page 311, were abolished.



The Treadmill for Women

From a broadside in the possession of Sir Charles Firth



IX

WOMEN IN THE PROFESSIONS: THE NURSE AND THE GOVERNESS

We have seen in Moll Flanders's case how necessary it was, if women were to live satisfactory lives, that they should have the chance and the ability to earn their own living. In one sense, of course, there have always been in England women who earned their own living. No class of people has worked harder than the housewives. The mothers of large families have often performed the duties of housekeeper, cook, general servant, family dressmaker, nurse and governess, rolled into one. Sometimes they have helped their husbands with farming, shopkeeping, innkeeping, and similar trades, and sometimes in their scanty spare time they have brought in additional money by working at home industries.

Now if, by earning one's own living, we mean doing in return for the necessaries of life as much of the world's

work as one individual can reasonably be expected to do, then no one could say that such women did not earn their own living. But, if we mean, being given a chance to do a fair share of the world's work and receiving in return, as a right, money which will enable us to buy the necessaries of life for ourselves and to spend our lives where and how we like, then we must allow that until nearly the end of the period with which this book deals very few women had earned their own living.

Let us think for a moment of the women of whom we have already spoken. Dorothy Osborne kept house for her father, but received no wages in return. She was not free to marry, and yet when her father died there was no house in which she felt she had a right to live. Elizabeth Pepys worked hard, but she had to beg for money to spend on clothes, and could not be sure that, when her husband died, he would leave her anything to live on. Moll Flanders's sad story was a result of her having no relations and being unable to find a trade at which she could earn money honestly. Lady Mary Montagu was able to live her own life because she had inherited money from her parents and had a wealthy and generous husband. Fanny Burney earned money at novel-writing, but, at first, dared not let her publishers, or the public, know that she was a woman. Anne Strudwick worked hard all her life, but though when her husband was alive her own wages were a valuable addition to the family income, yet when she became a widow they were not enough for her to live on. We cannot truly say, then, that women were able to earn their own living until we see both business and the professions thrown open to them on the same terms as to men.

How far did this come about in the period under discussion? Let us look first at the professions. Two

professions—acting and nursing—had long been open to women. To become successful actresses, women required natural talent, intelligence, and good looks even more than education and training, and these they possessed in common with men. Moreover, the theatre was immensely popular right from the beginning of our period, and actresses were in great demand. Under Cromwell plays were forbidden. Before his time women's parts on the stage had generally been taken by boys. But after the restoration of Charles II, when play-going was revived, a great many plays were written and acted in which the women's parts were not such as boys could act well. There was therefore no possibility of competition between men and women. So that during the eighteenth century, as new plays were produced and new theatres built, there appeared a greater number of brilliant and successful actresses than has perhaps ever been known since. Peg Woffington, Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Billington, are only a few of the most celebrated.

If we read the lives of these actresses we find that they owed their success almost entirely to their own exertions. True, several of them belonged to acting families. Mrs. Siddons had famous actors in three generations of her family, and began life as an ' infant phenomenon ' in her father's touring company. Mrs. Inchbald's mother and brother both had a talent for acting ; Mrs. Jordan's mother was on the stage. But these inherited talents were almost the only start in life which most of them were given. Peg Woffington's father died a pauper, and her mother sold watercress in the streets. Mrs. Abington, when a girl, sold flowers and sang outside tavern doors and was called ' nosegay Fan '. Kitty Clive as a child scrubbed lodging-house steps. Mrs. Inchbald, when a

girl of eighteen, ran away from home to London to seek her fortune.

Women so situated had to pick up their education where and how they could, and very well most of them managed. Mrs. Abington learnt French by apprenticing herself to a French milliner, and later picked up Italian from a foreign family to whom she acted as cook. Mrs. Siddons owed her good manners to the years which she spent as lady's maid in a famous country house. Mrs. Inchbald became a successful novel writer as well as an actress ; Kitty Clive, though she never learnt to spell properly (in her letters to Garrick she ' schreams ' and ' quarels ' over various ' afairs '), wrote plays which were successfully acted.

To these gifted and energetic women, honour, friends, and riches came as in a fairy tale. Peg Woffington was able to give her sisters the good education which had been denied to herself. Kitty Clive, before she left the stage, had a handsome house on the banks of the Thames. Mrs. Abington earned £12 a week (an immense sum at that time) and retired with a large fortune, a house, and an elegant carriage. Many made rich marriages ; nearly all could count among their friends writers like Dr. Johnson, politicians like Horace Walpole, even members of the royal family.

So much for the profession of acting. Now let us look at nursing. This was called a profession, but it was on a very different footing. Right up to the end of our period practically no training or qualifications were required for a nurse ; the wages paid were very low, and only women of the most debased character became nurses. Daniel Defoe, in his *Journal of the Plague Year*, tells us almost incredible stories of the ignorance, dishonesty, and untrustworthiness of the nurses who watched

The eighteenth-century Theatre and Stage. The engraving commemorates a riot in Covent Garden Theatre, 1763

over the sick poor. Here, for example, is one passage from his book :

'We had at this time a great many frightful stories told us of nurses and watchmen who looked after the dying people, using them barbarously, starving them, smothering them, or by other wicked means hastening their end. The women were in all this calamity the most rash, fearless and desperate creatures, and as there were vast numbers that went about as nurses they committed a great many petty thieveries in the houses where they were employed. These robberies extended chiefly to wearing clothes, linen, and what rings or money they could come at, when the person died who was under their care ; and I could give an account of one of these nurses who, several years after, being on her death bed, confessed with the utmost horror the robberies she had committed at the time of her being a nurse, and by which she had enriched herself to a great degree.'

Even rich men who could afford to pay high fees could not get capable nurses. John Evelyn, for example, lost both his sons through the ignorance and carelessness of the nurses whom he employed. In 1658 he writes in his journal :

'*Jan. 27th.* After six fits of a quartan ague with which it pleased God to visit him, died my dear son Richard. In my opinion he was suffocated by the women and maids that tended him, and covered him too hot with blankets as he lay in a cradle near an excessive hot fire in a close room.'

Six years later he writes again : 'It pleased God to take away my son, being now a month old. We suspected much the nurse had overlain him.'

Richard Steele in his *Tatler* gives us a lively account of what a poor baby might expect on his first introduction to the world.

'I lay very quiet ; but the witch, for no manner of reason or provocation in the world, takes me and binds my head as hard as she possibly could ; then ties up both my legs and makes me swallow down an horrid mixture. I thought it an harsh entrance

MRS. SIDDONS

A miniature by John Donaldson. Reproduced by the courtesy of the editor of 'The Connoisseur'

Mr. Puff and Tilburina

into life, to begin with taking physic. When I was thus dressed, I was carried to a bedside, where a fine young lady (my mother I wot) had like to have hugged me to death. . . .

'Crowds of relations came every day to congratulate my arrival; amongst others, my cousin Betty, the greatest romp in nature: she whisks me such a height over her head, that I cried out for fear of falling. She pinched me and called me squealing chit, and threw me into a girl's arms that was taken in to tend me. The girl was very proud of the womanly employment of a nurse, and took upon her to strip and dress me a-new, because I made a noise, to see what ailed me; she did so, and stuck a pin in every joint about me. I still cried, upon which, she lays me on my face in her lap; and, to quiet me, fell to nailing in all the pins, by clapping me on the back, and screaming a lullaby. But my pain made me exalt my voice above hers, which brought up the nurse, the witch I first saw, and my grand-mother. The girl is turned down stairs, and I stripped again, as well to find what ailed me, as to satisfy my granam's farther curiosity. . . .

'You are to understand that I was hitherto bred by hand, and anybody that stood next gave me food if I did but open my lips; insomuch, that I was grown so cunning, as to pretend myself asleep when I was not to prevent my being crammed. . . . I daily pined away, and should never have been relieved, had it not been that a Fellow of the Royal Society, who had writ upon cold baths, came to visit me, and solemnly protested, I was utterly lost for want of that method; upon which he soused me head and ears into a pail of water, where I had the good fortune to be drowned.

During the eighteenth century one is almost tempted to believe that women were without any single one of the qualities essential to a good nurse—coolness, patience, and courage. Fanny Burney, for example, was one of the most intelligent women of her time, but she apparently lost her head completely when her sister Susie fell ill—becoming hysterical herself, and exciting her patient rather than calming her. Here is her own version of the story, taken from her diary:

1769, *Saturday, Jan. 7th.* 'Oh dear oh dear! How melan-

A Seventeenth-Century Nursery

Douce Portfolio 136, *No.* 157

choly has been to us this last week, the first of this year ! Never during my life have I suffered more severely in my mind, I do believe ! But God be praised ! I hope it is now over ! The poor Susy, who I told you was disappointed of her Lynn journey by a violent cold, was just put to bed somewhat better when I wrote to you this day se'en night—I soon after went to her, and found her considerably worse. She talked to me in a most affecting style, her voice and manner were peculiarly touching.

'" My dear Fanny", cried she, " I love you dearly—my dear Sister ! Have I any more sisters ? " Oh how I was terrified—shocked—surprised ! " Oh yes ! " continued she, " I have sister Hetty—but I don't wish her to come to me now, because she'll want me to drink my barley water, and I can't—but I will if you want me—where 's papa ? " For my life I could not speak a word and almost choked myself to prevent my sobbing. " Oh dear, I shall die ! " " My dear girl ! " " Oh but I must though ! but I can't help it ! It 's not my fault you know ! " Though I almost suffocated myself with smothering my grief, I believe she perceived it, for she kissed me and again said, " How I love you ! my dear Fanny ! I love you dearly ! " " My sweet girl ", cried I, " you—you can't love me so much as I do you ! "

' In short, she talk'd in a manner inconceivably affecting—and how greatly I was shocked no words can express. My dear papa out of town too. We sent immediately for Mr. Heckford, an excellent apothecary, who has attended our family many years. He bled her immediately and said it would not be safe to omit it—she continued much the same some hours. Between 1 and 2 I went to bed, as she was sleeping, and Hetty and the maid sat up all night. She had a shocking night. At 7 o'clock Mr. Heckford was again called. She had a blister put on her back ; he begged that a physician might be directly applied to, as she was in a very dangerous way ! Oh my good God ! what did poor Hetty and myself suffer !

' Dr. Armstrong was sent for, and my good Aunt Nanny, who is the best nurse in England, tender, careful and affectionate, and but too well experienced in illness. Unfortunately Mr., Mrs. and Miss Dolly Young all came very early to spend the day here—I never went to them, or from Susy, till dinner, and then I could eat none, nor speak a word. Never, I believe, shall I forget the

shock I received that night. The fever increased—she could not swallow her medicines, and was quite delirious—Mr. Heckford said indeed she had a very poor chance of recovery ! He endeavoured himself to give her her physick, which he said was absolutely necessary, but in vain—she rambled—breathed short and was terribly suffering—her disorder he pronounced an inflammation of the breast. " I am sorry to say it," said he, " but indeed at best she stands a very poor chance." I felt my blood freeze—I ran out of the room in anguish beyond thought—and all I could do was to almost rave—and pray—in such an agony ! Oh what a night she had ! We all sat up—she slept perpetually, without being at all refreshed, and was so light-headed ! I kept behind her pillow and fed her with barley water in a teaspoon the whole night, without her knowing of it at all—indeed, she was dreadfully bad ! On Monday, however, the Dr. and apothecary thought her somewhat better, tho' in great danger. On Tuesday they ventured to pronounce her out of danger—we made Hetty go to bed and my Aunt and I sat up again and on Wednesday we two went to bed, the dear girl continuing to mend, which she has, tho' very slowly, ever since.'

If the novelists of the early nineteenth century are to be believed, things were not much better even then. Dickens wrote *Martin Chuzzlewit* in 1849 and tells us in his preface that the nurses who appear in it—Betsy Prig and Sarah Gamp—were portraits drawn from life, and that the original of Betsy Prig nursed one of his own friends through an illness. Betsy would steal her patient's pillow in order to make herself comfortable in an armchair ; and Mrs. Gamp, who went out nursing at ' eighteenpence a day for working people and three and six for gentlefolks, night watching being an extra charge ' was never far separated from her whisky bottle, which she would leave on the mantelpiece in order that she might put her lips to it when she was so disposed. We might think this account exaggerated, were it not that Charlotte Brontë, who wrote the novel *Shirley* in the

same year, tells a similar story. When the hero of the story, Gerard Moore, was wounded, a certain Mrs. Horsfall, a professional nurse, was called in to attend to him. Here is Charlotte Brontë's account of her :

'Mrs. Horsfall had one virtue, the Ten Commandments were less binding in her eyes than her surgeon's dictum. In other respects she was no woman, but a dragon. She sat upstairs when she liked, and downstairs when she preferred it. She took her dram three times a day, and her pipe of tobacco four times.

'Moore hated the sight of her rough bulk, and dreaded the contact of her hard hands, but she taught him docility in a trice. She made no account whatever of his six feet, his manly thews and sinews—she turned him in his bed as another woman would have turned a baby in its cradle. If she had not smoked, if she had not taken gin, it would have been better he thought, but she did both. Once, in her absence, he intimated to the Doctor that "that woman was a dram-drinker".

'"Pooh ! my dear Sir, they are all so," was the reply he got for his pains. "But Horsfall has this virtue," added the Surgeon, "drunk or sober, she always remembers to obey me".'

Nursing did not really become a profession until after the year 1854, when the Crimean War broke out, and Florence Nightingale revolutionized the nursing service. But the story of her work lies outside this book.

One other profession was, however, opened to women before the close of our period. This was teaching. During the first part of the century, as we have seen, the demand for women's education hardly existed ; during the second half private boarding-schools became more common ; at the end of the century the rage for accomplishments had set in and an army of governesses was employed in private houses. These were, however, poorly paid, almost entirely untrained, and socially despised. They were treated by their employers as a species of domestic servants and were granted the smallest

The Governess

The 'Dunce' punished by being made to stand on a stool and wear a fool's cap

From 'The Cowslip', 1811

possible degree of independence. Not until state schools were established, demanding a certain minimum of education and training on the part of teachers, paying a certain minimum salary and granting certain fixed conditions of employment, did teaching for women become tolerable as a career. But this did not happen until after the close of our period.

Of the women writers whom we have mentioned several were, at some period of their lives, teachers. Hannah More and her sisters, Mary Wollstonecraft and her sisters, opened private schools. Mary Wollstonecraft was also for some years governess in a private family. Perhaps the story of Charlotte Brontë, who was later than either of these, best illustrates the kind of life led by a woman teacher in the early days of the profession.

In Charlotte Brontë's case unusual circumstances made it necessary that she should earn her own living as early as possible. Her father was a country clergyman, living first at Thornton and then at Haworth, a lonely village among the Yorkshire moors, about nine miles from Bradford. He had a family of five girls and a boy, and an income of two hundred pounds a year, and a house. It was not likely, therefore, that he would be able to support all the girls, supposing that they did not marry.

Charlotte was born in 1816. She was the third of the five sisters. Her mother died when Charlotte was only five years old, and an aunt, Miss Branwell, came to look after the household. For the next three years the elder children educated themselves. They read and discussed books and newspapers, wrote poems and stories, drew portraits and landscapes, and took long walks over the moors surrounding their home. Miss Branwell believed that even talented and intelligent girls like Charlotte and her sisters should be brought up to use their hands as well

Go on Dear Child and may the lord of love Powr Down
is Blefsings from is throne a bove may he vow safe
and Gard thee with is care and lead thy footsteps from
each Dangers snare Jane Knapper aged 10 1802

A Child's Sampler, 1802

as their brains, and kept them for hours daily at housework and fine sewing.

In 1824, when Charlotte was eight years old, she and her sisters Maria, Elizabeth, and Emily were sent to a school for clergymen's daughters at Cowan's Bridge, in Westmoreland. This was in part a charity school. Their father could not afford to pay high fees for his daughters' education ; such money as he had to spare ought, he thought, to be spent upon his son. But the son, though he cost his father and his relations large sums, turned out worthless.

The following extract from the Cowan's Bridge School prospectus will show the kind of education given :

'The terms for clothing, lodging, boarding and educating are £14 a year ; and also £1 entrance money for the use of books, etc. The system of education comprehends history, geography, the use of the globes, grammar, writing and arithmetic, all kinds of needlework, and the nicer kinds of housework such as getting up fine linen, etc. If accomplishments are required, an additional charge of £3 a year is made for music or drawing each.'

When Charlotte and her sisters had been at school little more than a year, an epidemic of fever broke out and the two eldest girls died. Charlotte and Emily returned to Haworth. Charlotte did not go to school again till 1831, and then only for eighteen months—to Miss Wooler at Roe Head, this time less than twenty miles away. Here she was much happier than she had been at Cowan Bridge, so that in 1835, when her brother Branwell was eighteen, and anxious to be trained as an artist, Charlotte undertook to provide some of the necessary money by going back to Miss Wooler's school as a governess. Here is part of a letter in which she tells an old school friend of her plans :

'Haworth, July 6th, 1835.

'We are all about to divide, break up, separate. Emily is going to school, Branwell is going to London, and I am going to be

A Child's illustrated alphabet
about the time of William IV

a governess. This last decision I formed myself, knowing that I should have to take the step some time, and knowing well that papa would have enough to do with his limited income, should Branwell be placed at the Royal Academy, and Emily at Roe Head. Where am I going to reside? you will ask. At the identical Roe Head mentioned above. Yes! I am going to teach in the very school where I was myself taught. Miss W. made me the offer, and I preferred it to one or two proposals of private governesship which I had before received. I am sad, very sad—at the thoughts of leaving home; but duty—necessity—these are stern mistresses, who will not be disobeyed.'

Although, then, it was partly forced circumstances which made Charlotte decide to take up teaching as a profession, yet she held very strongly the view that, quite apart from questions of money, single women needed work of some definite kind to keep them happy. Here are the words of Caroline, the heroine of *Shirley*. There is no doubt that they express Charlotte's own opinions:

'Nobody in particular is to blame, that I can see, for the state in which things are, but I feel there is something wrong somewhere. I believe single women should have more to do—better chances of interesting and profitable occupation than they possess now. Look at the numerous families of girls in this neighbourhood. The brothers of these girls are every one in business or in professions; they have something to do. Their sisters have no earthly employment but household work and sewing; no earthly pleasure but an unprofitable visiting, and no hope, in all their life to come, of anything better. This stagnant state of things makes them decline in health; they are never well, and their minds and views shrink to wondrous narrowness. The great wish—the sole aim—of every one of them is to be married, but the majority will never marry—they will die as they now live. They scheme, they plot, they dress to ensnare husbands. Fathers are angry with their daughters when they observe their manners, they order them to stay at home. What do they expect them to do at home? If you ask, they would answer, sew and cook.

They expect them to do this, and this only, contentedly, regularly, uncomplainingly, all their lives, as if they had no germs of faculties for anything else—a doctrine as reasonable to hold as it would be that the fathers have no faculties but for eating what their daughters cook, or for wearing what they sew. Could men live so themselves? would they not be very weary? Men of England, look at your poor girls, many of them fading around you, dropping off in consumption or decline, or what is worse, degenerating to sour old maids because life is a desert to them. Fathers, cannot you alter these things? You would wish to be proud of your daughters and not to blush for them—then seek for them an interest and an occupation which shall raise them above the flirt, the manœuvrer, the mischief making talebearer. Give them scope, and work—they will be your gayest companions in health, your tenderest nursers in sickness, your most faithful prop in age.'

Charlotte stayed at Roe Head till 1838 and seems to have been fairly happy there, though she found the life monotonous and the work hard. Teaching was not really her vocation; she was too retiring, too devoted to her home and not interested enough in her pupils. Here are two extracts from letters to old school friends, written while she was at Roe Head, and showing how she felt about teaching:

'Now, Ellen, I have no news to tell you, no changes to communicate. My life since I saw you last has passed away as monotonously and unvaryingly as ever—nothing but teach, teach, teach from morning till night. The greatest variety I ever have is afforded by a letter from you, a call from the T-S, or by meeting with a pleasant new book.'

'Ever since last Friday I have been as busy as I could be in finishing up the half year's lessons, which concluded with a terrible fog in geographical problems (think of explaining that to Misses —— and —— !) and subsequently in mending Miss ——'s clothes. Miss —— is calling me; something about my protegee's nightcap. Goodbye. We shall meet ere many days, I think.'

In 1838 Charlotte's health broke down, and she had to

leave Roe Head and go home again. She now thought of trying to earn her living as an artist or book illustrator and practised such tiny and minute drawing that her eyes for the rest of her life were weak and strained. Then she turned again to writing and sent some of her poems to Robert Southey (who was Poet Laureate at this time) asking for his opinion. He, in reply, told her to write poetry, if she liked, for the pleasure of doing so, but to give up the idea of earning money by it. 'Literature', he said, 'cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and recreation.'

So for the time being Charlotte gave up the idea of writing. While she was in this discouraged frame of mind she received her first offer of marriage, but, in spite of the uncertainty of the future, she resisted the temptation to marry a man she did not love. In a letter written at the time she says :

'I had a kindly leaning towards him, because he is an amiable and well-disposed man. Yet I had not, and could not have, that intense attachment which would make me willing to die for him ; and if ever I marry, it must be in the light of adoration that I will regard my husband.'

So there seemed nothing for it but to take to teaching again. This time Charlotte tried for a post in a private family, thinking that such work would be less trying than a school. Writing to a friend on the 15th April 1839 she says :

'For my own part, I am as yet "wanting a situation", like a housemaid out of place. I have lately discovered I have quite a talent for cleaning, sweeping up hearths, dusting rooms, making beds, etc., so that if everything else fails I can turn my hand to that. I won't be a cook ; I hate cooking ; I won't be a nursery-

Do oblige me with a little harmony

The THIMBLE RESTORED.

From ' The Thimble Restored, or, The Idle Girl Converted to Habits of Industry ', 1825

maid, nor a lady's maid, far less a lady's companion, or a mantua maker, or a straw bonnet maker, or a taker in of plain work. I won't be anything but a housemaid.'

Two months later she became governess in the house of a wealthy Yorkshire manufacturer. Here she was, however, far less happy than she had been at Roe Head. Here are some extracts from letters describing her life :

'June 8th, 1839.

'I have striven hard to be pleased with my new situation. The country, the house, and the grounds are, as I have said, divine ; but, alack a day ! there is such a thing as seeing all beautiful around you and not having a free moment or a free thought left to enjoy them. The children are constantly with me. As for correcting them, I quickly found out that was out of the question; they are to do as they like. A complaint to the mother only brings black looks on myself, and unjust, partial excuses to screen the children. I said in my last letter that Mrs. —— did not know me. I now begin to find that she does not intend to know me ; that she cares nothing about me except to contrive how the greatest possible quantity of labour may be got out of me ; and to that end she overwhelms me with oceans of needlework, yards of cambric to hem, muslin nightcaps to make, and, above all things, dolls to dress. . . . I used to think I should like to be in the stir of grand folks' society ; but I have had enough of it—it is dreary work to look on and listen. I see more clearly than I have ever done before that a private governess has no existence, is not considered as a living rational being, except as connected with the wearisome duties she has to fulfil. . . . One of the pleasantest afternoons I have spent here—indeed the only one at all pleasant—was when Mr. —— walked out with his children and I had orders to follow a little behind. As he strolled on through his fields, with his magnificent Newfoundland dog at his side, he looked very like what a frank, wealthy, Conservative gentleman ought to be.'

'July, 1839.

'I cannot procure ink without going into the drawing-room, where I do not wish to go. If you were near me, perhaps I might

be tempted to tell you all, and to pour out the long history of a private governess's trials and crosses in her first situation. As it is I will only ask you to imagine the miseries of a reserved wretch like me, thrown at once into the midst of a large family at a time when the house was filled with company—people whose faces I had never seen before. In this state I had charge given me of a set of pampered, spoilt, turbulent children whom I was expected constantly to amuse, as well as to instruct. I soon found that the constant demand on my stock of animal spirits reduced them to the lowest state of exhaustion ; at times I felt and, I suppose, seemed—depressed. To my astonishment I was taken to task on the subject by Mrs. —— with a sternness of manner and a harshness of language scarcely credible ; like a fool, I cried most bitterly. I thought I had done my best—strained every nerve to please her ; and to be treated in that way, merely because I was shy and sometimes melancholy, was too bad. Mrs. —— behaves somewhat more civilly to me now than she did at first, and the children are a little more manageable ; but she does not know my character, and she does not wish to know it. I have never had five minutes' conversation with her since I came, except while she was scolding me.'

Charlotte did not stay long in this uncongenial situation. She returned home at the end of the summer, and immediately afterwards received another offer of marriage —this time from a young Irishman who had only met her once ! This temptation also she resisted.

For about a year Charlotte lived happily at home. She divided her time between housework, reading, writing, and answering advertisements for governesses. Her education had been too scrappy, and her qualifications were too few for her to find another situation easily. But in March 1841 she was successful.

Charlotte's second experience of life as a governess was much pleasanter than her first. Here are some extracts from letters describing her life : most of them are written to an old school friend, Ellen Nussey.

'March 3rd, 1841.

'I told you sometime since that I meant to get a situation, and when I said so my resolution was quite fixed. After being severely baffled two or three times—after a world of trouble in the way of correspondence and interviews—I have at length succeeded and am fairly established in my new place.

'The house is not very large, but exceedingly comfortable and well-regulated; the grounds are fine and extensive. My salary is not really more than £16 per annum, though it is nominally £20, but the expense of washing will be deducted therefrom. My pupils are two in number, a girl of eight and a boy of six. My pupils are wild and unbroken, but apparently well disposed. But no one but myself can tell how hard a governess's work is to me—I find it so hard to repel the rude familiarity of children. I find it so difficult to ask either servants or mistress for anything I want, however much I want it.

'Now can you tell me whether it is considered improper for governesses to ask their friends to come and see them. I do not mean, of course, to stay, but just for a call of an hour or two. If not I do fervently request that you will let me have a sight of your face.'

'March 21st, 1841.

'You must excuse a very short answer to your most welcome letter, for my time is entirely occupied. Mrs. —— expected a good deal of sewing from me. I cannot sew much during the day, on account of the children, who require the utmost attention. I am obliged therefore to devote the evening to this business. I like Mr. —— extremely. The children are overindulged and consequently at times hard to manage.

'During the last three weeks that hideous operation called "a thorough clean" has been going on in the house. During its progress I have fulfilled the double character of nurse and governess, while the nurse has been transmuted into cook and housemaid. I was beginning to think Mrs. —— a good sort of body, in spite of her bouncing and boasting, her bad grammar and worse orthography but, after treating a person on the most familiar terms of equality for a long time, if any little thing goes wrong she does not scruple to give way to anger in a very coarse unlady-like manner.'

The next extract is written in a reply to an invitation to spend the week-end with her friend :

'As soon as I had read your shabby little note I gathered up my spirits directly, walked on the impulse of the moment into Mrs. ——'s presence, popped the question, and for two minutes received no answer ! Will she refuse me when I work so hard for her ? thought I. "Yes," drawled madam in a reluctant, cold tone. "You'd better go on Saturday afternoon, then, when the children have a holiday, and if you return in time for them to have all their lessons on Monday morning, I don't see that much will be lost." '

Charlotte left her post at Christmas. Emily and Anne, her two younger sisters, were also by this time acting as governesses, and just as homesick as she was. So it occurred to them that if they could join forces and run a school in their own home they might enjoy each other's company and earn their living at the same time. But to make the school a success they needed better qualifications than they possessed at present, and particularly a knowledge of languages. So Charlotte and Emily decided to borrow money from their aunt and to go to Brussels and learn languages there. In February 1842 they became pupils in the school which Charlotte described later in her novels *The Professor* and *Villette*.

At Brussels both Charlotte and Emily made great progress in French. But at the end of 1842 the death of their aunt brought them home again. Emily did not return to Brussels, but in 1843 Charlotte went back to M. Heger's school, partly as student, partly as teacher. She was to teach English and study German. She received a salary of £16 a year, out of which she paid ten francs a month for her German lessons.

Once again Charlotte was solitary and lonely. She was English among foreigners, Protestant among Catholics,

and in the long school holidays she could not afford to go home. She became nervously depressed, and her health grew steadily worse.

At the end of 1843, hearing that her father was rapidly becoming blind and that her brother had brought serious trouble upon himself and upon the family, Charlotte suddenly decided to return to England. When she left, M. Heger gave her a certificate of ability to teach French and German. But the plan of keeping a school at home failed ; the sisters advertised but could get no pupils. The next year Charlotte accidentally discovered that both her sisters, like herself, wrote poetry, and the three decided to publish a volume of their joint work under assumed names and at their own expense. This they did in 1846, but there was hardly any sale for the poems.

Their next idea was to return to their old occupation of writing stories. Each sister began a novel. Charlotte's was called *The Professor*, Emily's was *Wuthering Heights*, and Anne's was *Agnes Grey*. The plan was kept secret from every one else. Each day the three sisters worked together, sitting round the same table. Each evening they read the day's work aloud, criticized it, and discussed the plots and characters. When the books were finished Emily's and Anne's were accepted by publishers, but Charlotte could get no firm to take *The Professor*. Undismayed, she immediately set to work on another book, *Jane Eyre*, largely the story of her own experiences, first at Cowan Bridge School, and later as a governess. *Jane Eyre* was at once accepted for publication, and was an immediate and tremendous success. Every one wondered who the author might be, and whether a man or a woman. When the secret leaked out, many people thought it an unsuitable book for a woman to have written.

In 1848 Branwell, Emily, and Anne all died. During

JANE EYRE.

An Autobiography.

EDITED BY

CURRER BELL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, AND CO., CORNHILL.

1847.

most of that dark year Charlotte lived nearly alone with her father, now growing old and blind, and an old servant, nearly ninety, who needed careful nursing. Charlotte did the housework, cared for the two invalids, and in her spare time wrote her second novel, *Shirley*, dealing mainly with incidents which had occurred while she was living at Roe Head.

Shirley was a great success and had an immense sale. Charlotte had found her vocation at last. Her living was secured and her fame established. In 1852 she published *Villette*, an account of her experiences at M. Heger's school at Brussels. About this time she paid several visits to London, and met many celebrated people, including Thackeray, but she never got over her shyness.

But Charlotte was not to earn her own living to the end of her life. In 1852 she was asked in marriage by her father's curate, Mr. Nicholls, but Mr. Brontë, for selfish reasons, positively forbade the match. Charlotte was willing, now as ever, to sacrifice her own happiness for the sake of her father, and Mr. Nicholls left the district ; but Charlotte's health grew so much worse that her father became alarmed and, in 1854, gave his consent to the marriage.

This took place in June 1854. Ellen Nussey, Charlotte's old schoolfriend, was the only bridesmaid, and Miss Wooler, of Roe Head School, gave the bride away.

Charlotte had nine months of happy married life. We know very little about it, for her husband had apparently no sympathy with his wife's talent for writing, and gave her no encouragement to go on. In a letter written to Ellen Nussey on the 7th September 1854, Charlotte says :

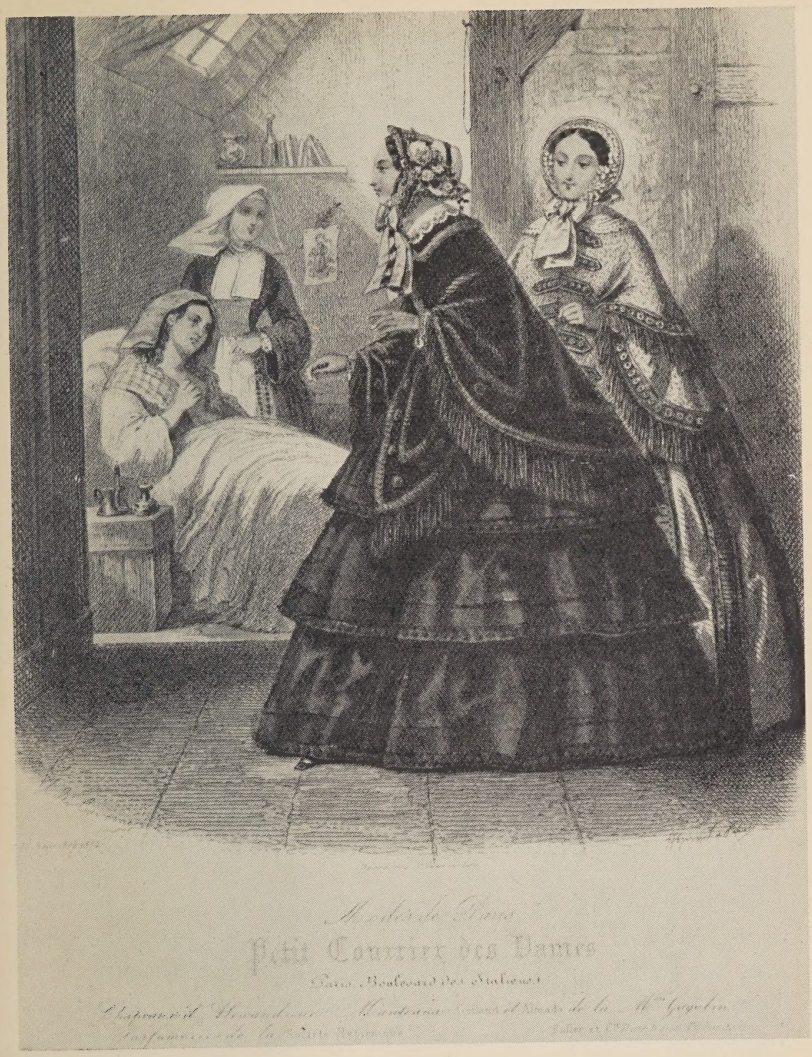
'Time is an article of which I once had a large stock always on hand ; where it is all gone to now it would be difficult to

She stretcheth out her hand to the Poor —
She looketh well to the ways of her Household Prov^s 31 Ch

A Schoolroom in 1840

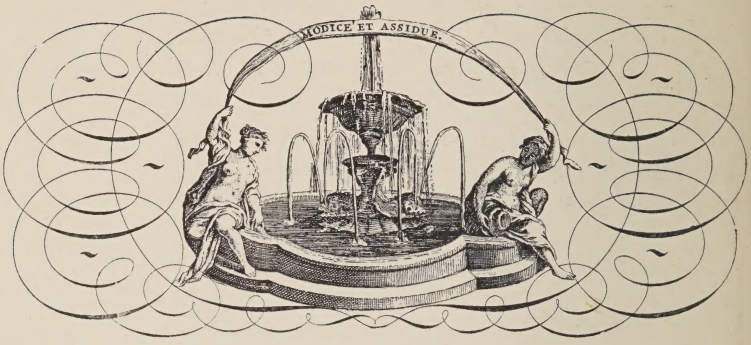
say, but my moments are very fully occupied. Take warning, Ellen. The married woman can call but a very small portion of each day her own. Not that I complain of this sort of monopoly as yet, and I hope I shall never incline to regard it as a misfortune, but it certainly exists.'

During the first few months of her married life Charlotte apparently worked very hard helping her husband with his parish-teaching in the Sunday school, visiting the sick, and giving public teas to the parishioners. But her health never really improved, and during the first winter after her marriage she grew thin and developed a hacking cough. In March 1855 she died. Her death was, partly at least, the result of a life spent always in the service of others and often in hard work for which she was not fitted. Had they lived a generation later, when life for unmarried women offered more opportunities and fewer hardships, Charlotte and her sisters need perhaps not have died so young.



'Visiting the Sick'

From a French fashion magazine ('Petit Courrier des Dames') of 1854



X

WOMEN'S INDUSTRY IN THE HOME AND THE FACTORY

We have seen how few openings there were, during the period 1650 to 1850, for women in the professions. Now let us look at industry. Right from the beginning of the period it was customary, as we know, for women to help their fathers or husbands with shopkeeping, farming, innkeeping, or whatever trade these happened to be employed in, and often to carry on the business after husband or father was dead. It was also common for women to earn additional money in their spare time by working at home industries—spinning in Yorkshire and Lancashire, stocking knitting in Durham, straw plaiting in Bedfordshire, lacemaking in Buckinghamshire, glove-making in Worcestershire. Work of this kind was found convenient because it could be picked up in the intervals of housework, and did not require complicated machinery,

Women serving coffee in an eighteenth-century Coffee House

It was customary for women to help their fathers or husbands with shopkeeping, farming, innkeeping, or whatever trade these happened to be employed in

or even a special room, though if the husband worked at the same trade, one room in a four-roomed cottage was often set aside as the workroom. The work was all done by hand, and much of it was simple enough for children to be able to help in.

This kind of work is known nowadays as work done under the domestic system of industry. In 1722, when Daniel Defoe toured England, the domestic system was in full swing. Defoe's book about his tour gives many glimpses of happy simple country homes—just a cottage with a garden attached, in which women and children, as well as men, were busily employed.

Chief among the trades so carried on was the spinning and weaving of cloth. Long before the beginning of our period this work had been done almost entirely by women for their own home. (The word 'wife' originally meant weaver, and the word 'spinster' a spinner.) Linen thread was made up at home into sheets, table linen, underclothes, smocks, and summer dresses; wool was spun and woven into blankets and homespun cloth. (Strictly speaking, cotton was unknown in England before the beginning of our period, though the word cotton—a corrupted form of coatings—was used in Lancashire for a particular kind of linen material.)

In Defoe's time there were three great centres of the spinning and weaving industry. All three depended on the presence of water—so necessary for cleaning and dyeing. The first and oldest was the district centring round Norwich, famous for wool and silk weaving, and watered by wide, slow rivers. The name of a Norfolk village, 'Worstead', is almost all that is now left to remind us of this old East Anglian industry. In this district Defoe found that though the actual weaving of the thread into cloth was done by men in specially designed buildings

called ' manufactories ', yet the spinning of the thread was still done mainly by women in their own homes.

Secondly came the ' west of England tweed district '—the valley of the Avon and Severn, stretching as far west as Taunton. Here too, Defoe found the spinning done by the women in their own homes, while even the youngest children were employed in helping to clean and comb the wool.

' There was not a child in Taunton,' said one of the chief manufacturers to Defoe, ' or in the villages round it, of above five years old, but, if it was not neglected by its parents, and untaught, could earn its own bread.'

The third centre—a new, but important and rapidly growing one—was the West Riding of Yorkshire, where the rivers were more numerous and swifter than in the other districts, and where moorland pastures, excellent for rearing sheep, were close at hand. Here every house had its garden, its cow, its stream, its workshop, its piece of waste ground for bleaching cloth, and its horse ' to fetch home his wool and his provisions from the market, to carry his yarn to the spinners, his manufacture to the fulling mill, and, when finished, to the market to be sold.'

Here too, says Defoe,

' We saw the houses full of lusty fellows, some at the dye vat, some at the loom, others dressing the cloths, the women and children carding or spinning ; all employed from the youngest to the oldest ; scarce anything above four years old but its hands were sufficient for its support. Not a beggar to be seen, not an idle person except here and there in an almshouse, built for those that are ancient and past working. The people in general live long ; they enjoy good air, and under such circumstances hard labour is naturally attended with the double blessing both of health and riches.'

What part precisely did women play in this industry ?

Ripe Strawberries.

The merry Milk Maid

Old Satten Old Taffety or Velvet

Crab Crab any Crabs

From Tempest's 'Cryes of London', 1711

Maids buy a Mop

Maids any Cunny Skins.

4 Pair for a Shilling Holland Socks

Buy my Dutch Biskets

From Tempest's 'Cryes of London', 1711

The wool after it came from the shearers was usually cleaned and then taken in packets to the cottages where it was to be spun. Here the children, working with wire brushes called cards, would comb and straighten the fibres. Then the women, using the spinning wheel in the south of England and the older fashioned spindle and distaff in the north, would twist the fibres into a long, continuous thread or yarn. This would be either made into cloth by the hand weaver working at home on his own loom, or collected again by the master, paid for, and taken to the 'manufactory'. Since yarn could be woven into cloth much more quickly than it could be spun, the women and children were often kept very hard at work while the weavers were waiting for yarn.

Many small home industries were centred in London, and the finished articles were hawked about the streets by 'criers'. A Dutch artist who drew the street criers of London, in the reign of Queen Anne, has left us a list of the 'crys' from which we may guess something of the nature of these old-time domestic trades.

Any Card Matches or Save Alls.
A Bed Matt or a Door Matt.
Buy a fine Table Basket.
Old Shoes for some Broomes.
Hot bak'd Warders [1] Hott.
Buy my Dutch biskets.
Troope,[2] every One.
A Merry new Song.
Four paire for a Shilling, Holland Socks.
Colly Molly Puffe.[3]
Long thread Laces, long and Strong.
London Gazettes [4] here.

[1] Warders were Rabbits.

[2] Troope, that is, troop-horses; wooden horses mounted on sticks and sold for children's toys.

[3] A famous pastry-cook mentioned in the *Spectator*.

[4] Newspapers.

Old Satten, Old Taffety or Velvet.
Maids, buy a Mopp.
Buy a new Almanack.
Four for Sixpence, Mackrell.

And on pages 366, 367, are the criers themselves.

Many of these articles were home-made, and the vendors were often women.[1] It was a constant complaint that the street cries were deafening, and the criers bad characters. Gay in his poem on the *Art of Walking the London Streets* recounts the perils (both to person and pocket) which the foot-passenger risked from the unwelcome attentions of the numerous tribe of hawkers, and Sir Roger de Coverley, fresh from the country, was almost terrified by them.

Conditions in the other home industries in which women worked were very similar to those in the spinning and weaving industries. One striking exception, however, was the kind of work done by women in the Black Country round Birmingham, where they worked side by side with their husbands in the blacksmith's shops. Here is William Hutton's account of a visit which he paid to Birmingham in 1741:

'When first I approached Birmingham from Walsall, in 1741, I was surprised at the number of blacksmith's shops upon the road, and could not conceive how a county could support so many people of the same occupation. In some of these shops I observed one or more females, stripped of their upper garment, wielding the hammer with all the grace of the sex. The beauty of their faces was somewhat eclipsed by the smut of the anvil. Struck with the novelty, I enquired whether the ladies in these parts shod horses? and was answered with a smile, "They are nailers".'

Farming is another industry in which women have always taken a share, but although it was common in our

[1] The street trade in vegetables was almost exclusively in the hands of Irishwomen.

ARTIFICIAL HAIR.

THE very great inconvenience, in warm weather (to say nothing of the extreme danger attendant on wearing False Hair), induces the Proprietor of the TRICOSIAN FLUID to recommend to Ladies in general the use of this distinguished Preparation, for changing Red or Grey Hair to various beautiful and permanent Shades of Flaxen, Brown, or Black, in the course of a few hours. Its merits are not solely confined to changing the Colour only, as it strengthens the weakest Hair, prevents its falling off, and increases the growth to a degree of luxuriance that rivals every Composition yet offered for similar purposes.

In a word, to convince the Public of the above assertions, any Lady sending a lock of hair (post paid) sealed at that end which is cut from the head, shall, in the course of one day, have it returned (free of expence) changed to any colour shewn at the places of sale. Such an unequivocal and liberal offer, the Proprietor trusts will convince more than all the panegyric words can bestow.

*** Ladies are particularly requested to mention whether they wish Fluid for Flaxen, Light Brown, Dark Brown, or Black.

Sold by order of the Proprietor, at Mr. Golding's, Perfumer, Cornhill; Mr. Overton's, No. 47, New Bond-street; Mr. Wright's, Wade's-passage, Bath; and Mr. Newel, Britton-street, Dublin; at 1l. 1s. per bottle, duty excluded.

Newspaper advertisement, about 1800

Artificial hair and head-dress

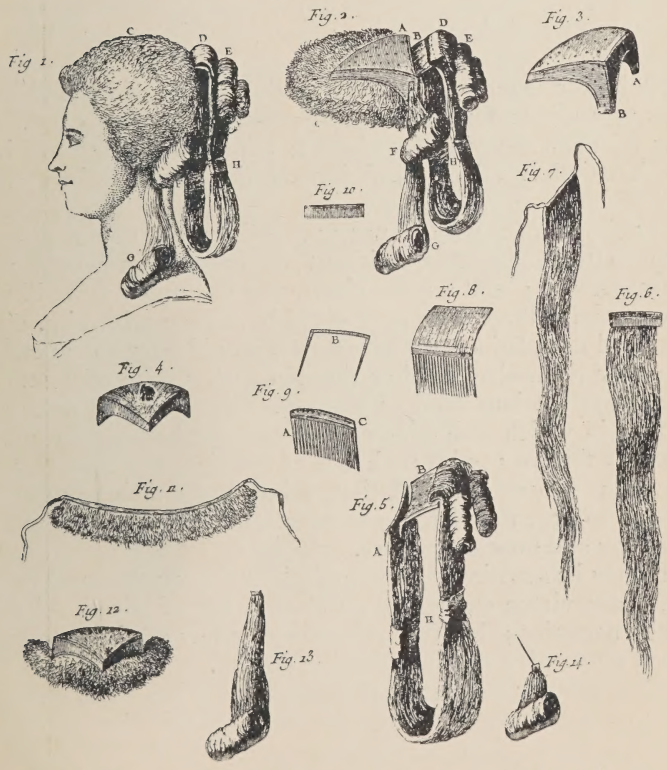
From the 'Recueil de Planches', Paris, 1762–7

HAIR POWDER.

HAIR powder was introduced by ballad ſingers at the fair of St. Germaine, in the year 1614. In the beginning of the reign of George I, only two ladies wore powder in their hair, and they were pointed at for their ſingularity. At the coronation of George II, there were only two hair-dreſſers in London. In the year 1795, it was calculated that there were in the kingdom of Great Britain fifty thouſand hair-dreſſers!' Suppoſing each of them to uſe one pound of flour in a day, this, upon an average, would amount to 18,250,000 pounds in one year, which would make 5,314,280 quartern loaves; which at only ninepence each, amounts to one million, one hundred and forty-ſix thouſand, four hundred and twenty-one pounds, Britiſh money. This ſtatement does not take in the quantity of flour uſed by the ſoldiers, or that which is conſumed by thoſe who dreſs their own hair.

Were ſuch a man as Swift to write a volume of allegorical travels, he might deſcribe the Engliſh as a people who wear *three-penny loaves* on their heads, by way of *ornament*. .

Newspaper cutting of the Nineties



Hairdressing, from the ' Recueil de Planches', Paris, 1762–7

period for women to work as farmers' wives or as farm labourers, it was not so common for them to run a farm themselves. Sir Frederick Eden was informed of one case in which this happened, and he thought it so remarkable that his book gives a full account of it, as follows :

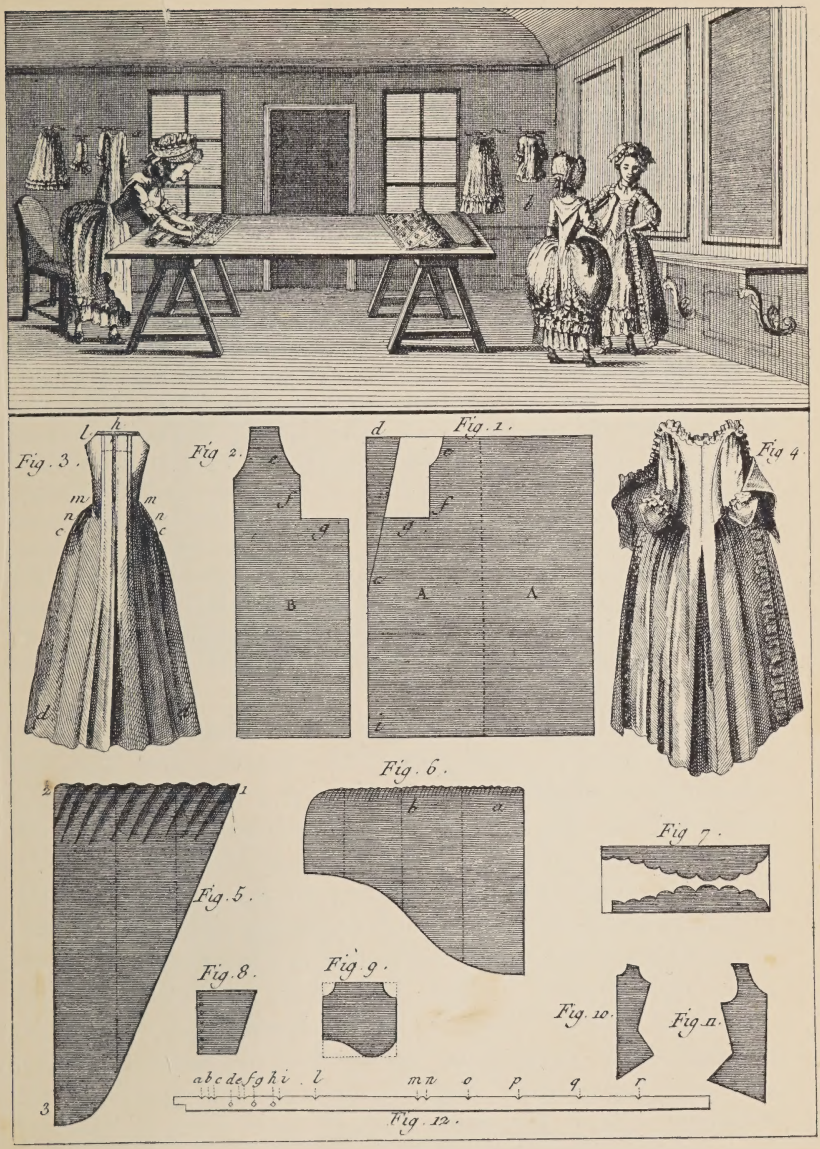
'That women are not disqualified from shining in the most active and laborious spheres of life, the following interesting biographical sketch, which was obligingly communicated to me by a friend, seems to afford very satisfactory evidence.

'Miss Sarah Spencer was the daughter of a gentleman in Sussex; her brother having once been high sheriff of the county. But, her family possessing only a competent landed estate, and being neither engaged, nor in circumstances to engage, in any lucrative profession, like too many others in this age of universal commerce, insensibly dwindled to nothing ; and though she had been well and genteelly educated, and with such views as are common to people in her sphere of life, yet, on the demise of her father, she found her whole fortune did not amount to quite £300. Her sister Mary, a woman of perhaps not inferior goodness of heart, though certainly of very inferior abilities, was left in a similar predicament.

'Their persons, though not uncomely, were not so attractive as to flatter them that, without fortunes, they would marry advantageously ; and a mere clown was not much more likely to be happy with them than they could have been with him. They either had no relations, on whom they would have been permitted to quarter themselves or they thought such a state of dependence but a more specious kind of beggary. Yet living in an age and country, in which well-educated women not born to fortunes are peculiarly forlorn ; with no habits of exertion, nor even of a rigid frugality ; they soon found, that, being thus unable to work, and ashamed to beg, they had no prospect but that of pining to death in helpless and hopeless penury.

'It may be questioned, perhaps, whether even the most resolute spirits have virtue enough to embrace a life of labour till driven to it by necessity ; but it is no ordinary effort of virtue to submit to such a necessity with a becoming dignity.

'This virtue these sisters possessed ; at a loss what else to do



Dressmaking. Fitting and cut-out patterns

From the 'Recueil de Planches', Paris, 1762–7

they took a farm ; and without ceasing to be gentlewomen, commenced farmers. This farm they carried on for many years, much to their credit and advantage ; and, as far as example goes, in an instance where example is certainly of most effect, not less to the advantage of their neighbourhood. To this day the marks of their good husbandry are to be seen in the village of Rottington.

'How it is to be accounted for, without reflecting on both the good sense and the virtue of those persons in the community, whom a real patriot is the most disposed to respect, I mean the yeomanry and the peasantry of our villages, it might not be easy to say ; but the fact is indisputable that those who have been most distinguished for their endeavours to promote improvements in agriculture have but rarely been popular characters. This was the hard fate of the Spencers ; who, instead of gratitude, long experienced little else than discourtesies and opposition in their neighbourhood. The more active of them was called Captain Sally ; and her sister her Man Mary. With the gentry around them, this was not the case ; by these they were visited and respected as they deserved to be ; and, not seldom, in one and the same day, have they divided their hours in helping to fill the dung cart, and receiving company of the highest rank and distinction. And it was hard to say which of these offices they performed with most intelligence and grace.'

There are just one or two trades which have always been women's trades—carried on by women and for the benefit of women. Dressmaking and millinery are the chief of these. Right from the beginning of the eighteenth century we get glimpses of fashionable women, like Lady Montagu and Fanny Burney, paying visits to their milliners and dressmakers, and receiving visits from them. Wig-making and the art of head-dressing employed both men and women. But it is very difficult to find out much about these trades. Both seem, however, to have been carried on under the old apprenticeship system. Since they were skilled trades, training was required. So a girl who wished to become a milliner or a dressmaker bound herself at about the age of

BEETHAM *verſus* BIRD.

This day is publiſhed, price One Shilling.

The Trial of an Action, brought by E. Beetham, againſt S. Bird, for the infringement of a Patent the Plaintiff had obtained, for a PORTABLE WASHING MILL.

IN this cauſe, Patentees will find their ſecurity againſt counterfeits, and the Public the moſt reſpectable teſtimonies of the ſuperiority of Beetham's original Patent Waſhing Mill.

2. They will alſo be convinced, that every other invention of the kind is not only a ſpurious treſpaſs on the right of Mr. Beetham, but alſo a groſs impoſition on public confidence.

3. They will likewiſe perceive, that there ſtill exiſts, in this country, tribunals of law, to which the injured may reſort for protection of right and property.

4. The reſpectable evidence proves, that it is the opinion of the firſt mechanics, that no Mill has been yet, or, indeed, ever can be invented more effectual for the purpoſe of waſhing linen &c with the greateſt eaſe, effect, ſafety and economy.

5. In a word, the whole of this trial, in which the Plaintiff obtained a complete verdict, is replete with evidence of Beetham's Waſhing Mill being one of the moſt beneficial inventions that has been diſcovered for the ſervice of mankind.

BY PARTICULAR DESIRE.

AT No. 27, Fleet ſtreet, This and every Day will be preſented a favorite EXHIBITION called

THE WONDER,

OR,

THE MAGIC MILL.

Conſiſting of a very curious and ſimple piece of MECHANISM, which, with the aſſiſtance of one Perſon only, will waſh

SIXTY SHIRTS IN AN HOUR,

So effectually as greatly to ſurpaſs the common mode, and ſo ſafely that Bank Bills will undergo the ſame operation without receiving the leaſt injury.

Proportionate Prices.

A Mill large enough to waſh 8 ſhirts, 4l. 4s.---14 ſhirts, 4l. 14s. 6d.---18 ſhirts, 5l. 5s.---24 ſhirts, 6l. 6s.

*** The EXHIBITION is not only to be ſeen Gratis, but every Purchaſer of the Article will aſſuredly ſave Fifteen Shillings in a Guinea.

VIVANT REX ET REGINA!

Late Eighteenth-Century Labour Saving devices. Newspaper advertisement

fourteen as apprentice to her mistress for a period of five to seven years. During this period she would work for her mistress, for the first few years for no wages at all, for the next few for a very small wage, in return for being taught the business. Sometimes she would sleep at the shop ; almost always she would take her meals there. During her apprenticeship period she would be as much under her mistress's authority as she was under her parents, and would have to satisfy her mistress as regards conduct. At the end of her apprenticeship she would work for a few years for full wages and then, if she was a successful worker and had saved a little money, would set up in business on her own account and perhaps take apprentices herself.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the apprenticeship system was a real thing, regulated by Act of Parliament, and most apprentices really got good teaching, and were well cared for by their masters and mistresses. But in 1814 the 'Statute of Apprentices', which laid down rules for the treatment of apprentices, was repealed, and after this date the aim of a master or mistress was not so much to train their apprentices as skilled workmen as to get as much value as possible out of them. And many apprentices, when their term was over, found themselves without the savings which would enable them to set up for themselves, without an all-round knowledge of their trade, and even without a job, since their mistresses would rather take on new apprentices than pay the old ones higher wages. Hence the life of an apprentice in the early nineteenth century was not an enviable thing.

Mrs. Gaskell, the wife of a Unitarian Minister living in Manchester, wrote in 1848 a novel whose heroine, Mary Barton, is a dressmaker's apprentice. Here is her

Home Industries. Mob Cap making

From 'Elements of Morality for the use of children'. Third edition, 1792

account of the circumstances under which Mary took up this trade. John Barton is Mary's father ; her mother had died three years previously :

'John Barton's most practical thought was getting Mary apprenticed to a dressmaker ; for he had never left off disliking a factory life for a girl, on more accounts than one.

'Mary must do something ; the factories being, as I said, out of the question, there were two things open—going out to service and the dressmaking business and against the first of these Mary set herself with all the force of her strong will. The end of all the thoughts of father and daughter was, as I said before, Mary was to be a dressmaker ; and her ambition prompted her unwilling father to apply at all the first establishments, to know on what terms of painstaking and zeal his daughter might be admitted into ever so humble a workwoman's situation. But high premiums were asked at all. Then he tried second rate places. At all the payment of a sum of money was necessary, and money he had none. The next day Mary set out herself, and before night she had engaged herself as apprentice (so called, though there were no deeds or indentures to the bond) to a certain Miss Simmonds, milliner and dressmaker, in a respectable little street where the workwomen were called "her young ladies", and for whom Mary was to work for two years without any remuneration, on consideration of being taught the business ; and where afterwards she was to dine and have tea, with a small quarterly salary (paid quarterly because so much more genteel than by the week). In summer she was to be there by six, bringing her day's meals during the first two years ; in winter she was not to come till after breakfast. Her time for returning home at night must always depend upon the quantity of work Miss Simmonds had to do.'

There is a vivid picture of the horrors of a dressmaker's room in *Ruth*, another of Mrs. Gaskell's novels. Ruth's employer was a hard-featured and hard-hearted woman, by name Mrs. Mason. It is the night before the County Ball, and the workroom is feverishly busy.

'Mrs. Mason worked away as hard as any of them ; but she was older and tougher ; and, besides, the gains were hers. But

even she perceived that some rest was needed. "Young ladies! there will be an interval allowed of half-an-hour. Ring the bell, Miss Sutton. Martha shall bring you up some bread, and cheese, and beer. You will be so good as to eat it standing—away from the dresses—and to have your hands washed ready for work when I return. In half-an-hour," said she once more, very distinctly; and then she left the room.

'It was curious to watch the young girls as they instantaneously availed themselves of Mrs. Mason's absence. One fat, particularly heavy-looking damsel, laid her head on her folded arms and was asleep in a moment, refusing to be wakened for her share in the frugal supper, but springing up with a frightened look at the sound of Mrs. Mason's returning footstep, even while it was still far off on the echoing stair. Two or three others huddled over the scanty fireplace. Some employed the time in eating their bread and cheese, with as measured and incessant a motion of the jaws (and almost as stupidly placid an expression of countenance) as you may see in cows ruminating in the first meadow you happen to pass.

'Some held up admirably the beautiful ball-dress in progress, while others examined the effect, backing from the object to be criticised in the true artistic manner. Others stretched themselves into all sorts of postures to relieve the weary muscles; one or two gave vent to all the yawns, coughs, and sneezes that had been pent up so long in the presence of Mrs. Mason. But Ruth Hilton sprang to the large old window, and pressed against it as a bird presses against the bars of its cage. She put back the blind and gazed into the quiet moonlight night. It was doubly light—almost as much so as day—for everything was covered with the deep snow which had been falling silently ever since the evening before.

'They remained in separate trains of thought till Mrs. Mason's step was heard, when each returned supperless, but refreshed, to her seat.

'Mrs. Mason was particularly desirous that her workwomen should exert themselves to-night, for, on the next, the annual hunt-ball was to take place. It was the one gaiety of the town since the assize-balls had been discontinued. Many were the dresses she had promised should be sent home "without fail" the next morning; she had not let one slip through her fingers, for

fear, if it did, it might fall into the hands of the rival dressmaker who had just established herself in the very same street.

'She determined to administer a gentle stimulant to the flagging spirits, and with a little preliminary cough to attract attention, she began—"I may as well inform you, young ladies, that I have been requested this year, as on previous occasions, to allow some of my young people, to attend in the ante-chamber of the assembly room with sandal ribbon, pins, and such little matters, and to be ready to repair any accidental injury to the ladies' dresses. I shall send four—of the most diligent." She laid a marked emphasis on the last words, but without much effect; they were too sleepy to care for any of the pomps and vanities, or, indeed, for any of the comforts of this world, excepting one sole thing—their beds.'

Mary Barton is supposed to have been apprenticed somewhere about 1836. Seven years later, in 1843, Parliament appointed a committee to inquire into conditions of work in many of the trades in which women were at that time employed, and it was found that conditions in the dressmaking trade were almost worse than in any other. Girls were still apprenticed at fourteen or sixteen until twenty-one years of age. If they were boarded by their mistresses they received bad or insufficient food. On Sundays they were turned out of doors and, if they came from the country and were apprenticed in a large town, often had to walk the streets all day, as they had no friends whom they could visit. Their hours of work were far too long. Sometimes they worked regularly fifteen hours a day, and eighteen in emergencies; occasionally, as for example when large mourning orders came in, they worked the entire night through, and never seem to have had more than six hours' sleep. As a result they suffered constantly from headache, indigestion, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, and hysteria. Many developed consumption. Many became nearly blind.

In order to obtain this information, the committee

called before it as witnesses many of the leading physicians from the big public hospitals, and these gave accounts of cases which had come before their notice. Here is a summary of the evidence given by Frederick Tyrell, a surgeon at St. Thomas's Hospital :

'A fair and delicate girl, about seventeen years of age, was brought to witness in consequence of total loss of vision. On examination, both eyes were found disorganized, and recovery therefore was hopeless. She had been an apprentice as a dress-maker at the West end of the town, and some time before her vision became affected her general health had been materially deranged from too close confinement and excessive work. The immediate cause of the disease in the eyes was excessive and continued application to making mourning. She stated that she had been compelled to remain without changing her dress for nine days and nights consecutively ; that during this period she had been permitted only occasionally to rest on a mattress placed on the floor for an hour or two at a time, and that her meals were placed at her side cut up, so that as little time as possible should be spent in their consumption.'

A similar case was described by John Dalrymple, Assistant Surgeon at the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital :

'A delicate and beautiful young woman, an orphan, applied at the hospital for very defective vision. Upon enquiry it was ascertained that she had been apprenticed to a milliner, and was in her last year of indentureship. Her working hours were eighteen in the day, occasionally even more ; her meals, snatched with scarcely an interval or a few minutes from work, and her general health was evidently assuming a tendency to consumption. An appeal was made, by my directions, to her mistress for relaxation ; but the reply was that in this last year of her apprenticeship her labours had become valuable, and that her mistress was entitled to them as recompense for teaching. Subsequently a threat of appeal to the Lord Mayor, and a belief that a continuation of the occupation would soon render the apprentice incapable of labour, induced the mistress to cancel the indentures, and the victim was saved.'

And here is the opinion of Sir James Clark (physician to Queen Victoria) :

'I have found the mode of life of these poor girls such as no constitution could long bear. Worked from six in the morning till twelve at night with the exception of the short intervals allowed for their meals, in close rooms, and passing the few hours allowed for rest in still more close and crowded apartments—a mode of life more completely calculable to destroy human health could scarcely be contrived, and this at a period of life when exercise in the open air, and a due proportion of rest, are essential to the development of the system. I can scarcely believe that the system adopted in our worst-regulated manufactories can be so destructive of health as the life of the young dressmaker, and I have long been most anxious to see something done to rescue these unfortunate girls from the slavery to which they are subjected.'

It was not until long after the close of our period that conditions in women's industries began to improve. Things had, in fact, to get worse before they became better. It was proved by experience that for women simply to enter into industry was not enough to secure them economic independence. Owing to various causes, there seems always to have been a tendency for women to work longer hours, for lower wages, and under less favourable conditions, than men, and to do less skilled work. The problem of protecting women against 'sweating' has, in fact, not yet been solved, though Parliamentary regulations, better education for women, and the growth of the Trade Union spirit among them have all helped.

The work that we have been speaking of was carried on under what is known as the domestic, or home system, of industry, and so long as work was done in this way there was no need for large towns. Cottage workshops could be scattered all over the country wherever water and wood, for fuel, were to be found. But because the

great rivers and most of the big forests were found in the east and south of England, there were more towns and a larger population there than in the north and west. Sussex, for example, when Daniel Defoe visited it in 1722, was a populous and industrious county. But during the second half of our period—from 1760 onwards—there took place a number of changes which completely altered the appearance of the country and the conditions under which work—both men's and women's—was carried on, and which brought about what is known as the 'Industrial Revolution'.

In the first place, machinery was invented which would do work more quickly than it had hitherto been done by hand. In 1769 Hargreaves, a weaver living near Blackburn, became tired of the time which he, in common with other weavers, had to waste collecting yarn from spinners in the cottages round about, and invented a machine which he named 'Spinning Jenny' after his wife, because it could spin as well, and more quickly than she could. As a result of 'Jenny's' industry Blackburn market was soon flooded with yarn, and the hand spinners, fearing lest the new machine would take the bread out of their mouths, came to Hargreaves's cottage, smashed the machine, and forced him and his family to leave the district.

This did not, however, prevent the machine from being improved upon, and 'Jennies' were constructed which could spin first eight, then twelve, then twenty threads at once, while a hand spinner could still only spin one.

In the same year a second great discovery was made—that machines could be worked by water power instead of turned by hand. And when in 1769 a further invention—Crompton's mule—made it possible for yarn to be spun

much finer than ever before, methods in the spinning industry were completely changed.

It might have been thought that improvements in spinning would have pleased the weavers by keeping them busy and providing them with plenty of yarn. But now the new machines turned out yarn much more quickly than the weavers could work it up. Consequently spinners who could not find a market for their yarn at home began selling it abroad ; and since at this time continental weavers worked for much lower wages than did English weavers, the yarn came back in the form of foreign cloth, and was sold at a lower price than English cloth, and the English weavers were thrown out of work.

The only remedy was for a weaving machine to be invented which would enable the weavers to work up yarn as fast as it could be spun. This was done in 1785, when Cartwright, a clergyman, invented his power loom. At a mill which he erected in Doncaster twenty looms were worked by a single wheel turned by a bull. Now at last spinning and weaving could go on equally quickly. But at this stage the fear arose that the new machines would throw the handworkers out of employment, and spinners and weavers alike turned on the machines and smashed them.

The worst of these ' machine-breaking riots ', as they were called, occurred in 1812. But they were entirely unsuccessful. New machines were erected as fast as the old ones were smashed, and since many M.P.s were owners of the new machinery Parliament was much more inclined to punish rioting than to forbid the machines being used. So the machines won the day. Charlotte Brontë, in her novel, *Shirley*, describes an interview between Gerard Moore, one of these owners, and a group of unemployed

handweavers who threaten to destroy his machines. Moore, after listening to them, says :

'You have had your say, and now I will have mine. You desire me to quit the country, you request me to part with my machinery. In case I refuse you threaten me. I do refuse point blank ! Here I stay, and by this mill I stand, and into it will I convey the best machinery inventors can furnish. What will you do ? The utmost you can do is to burn down my mill, destroy its contents and shoot me. What then ? Would that stop invention or exhaust science ? Not for the fraction of a second of time ! Another and better gig mill would rise on the ruins of this, and perhaps a more enterprising owner come in my place.'

Gerard Moore was drawn from life, and was typical of the Yorkshire mill owners at the time of the Luddite Riots. He and his kind owed their existence to the third great change now to be described. Until the end of the eighteenth century, roughly speaking, the new machinery was worked by water power, but after that date it was found that it could be much more easily worked with steam. Now steam meant coal instead of wood for fuel and so the new factories came to be built near the coal-fields instead of near the great forests. This meant that new towns grew up in the Midlands and North of England, and that the population gradually moved from the south and east to the new centres.

Curiously enough, the first to go were the children. Two important discoveries were made by the owners of the early factories—first, that though a human being might get tired a machine did not, but could go on working happily all day and all night; secondly, that where machines were used much of the work could be done as well by children as by adults. And children, it was known, were cheaper than adults, and less inclined to resist if forced to work long hours. But where were the children to come from ? The end of the eighteenth

century and beginning of the nineteenth was, as we have seen, a time of great distress among country workers. Many had applied to the parish for relief and the workhouses were full of pauper children, some orphans, whom the authorities would be only too thankful to get rid of. So the mill owners applied to the poor law authorities, especially those of London and the southern counties, asking for child labour. Some refused, but others found the mills a godsend, as would appear from the following notice in an Oxford newspaper for the 6th November 1791.

'On Wednesday, in the Afternoon, three covered Caravans arrived in here in which were forty-nine Boys and Girls from the Workhouse at Gosport, who were on their way for Manchester, in order to be bound apprentices in the Cotton Manufactories of that place. They all appeared well and perfectly happy and it were to be wished, that Parish officers in general were attentive to the placing out of the Children of indigent Parents, so as to render them useful members of the community.'

In theory the children were apprenticed to the factory owners ; but in practice they might just as well have been sold. Sometimes the authorities went so far as to refuse to grant relief to parents unless in exchange for the right of disposing of their children. The children were bound over from the age of seven usually till twenty-one. They were solely under the authority of their master, who clothed, lodged, fed, and worked them. Lancashire and Yorkshire were a long way from London ; the parents could not find out how their children were treated, and there were no factory inspectors. If the children ran away notice was given to the police, and they were brought back. If they fell ill or died there was often no inquiry made.

It is not to be wondered at, then, if conditions in the

Mr Bumble degraded in the eyes of the Paupers.

Charles Dickens's exposure of the workhouse in 'Oliver Twist' illustrated by George Cruikshank

early factories were almost too terrible to be described. Many of the children were improperly fed, improperly clothed, and consequently delicate in health. The air of the factory was full of cotton dust, hence many became consumptive. The work was carried on in very hot rooms ; the change from these to a cold atmosphere on leaving work caused all sorts of illnesses. Many children started work at three, four, or five years old ; the usual age was seven. They often stood at their work twelve hours a day ; some worked fifteen and some eighteen hours. Much of the work was done by lamp light and candle light, and so was injurious to the eyes. Much of it was night work ; day and night shifts were sometimes worked alternately so that the machines need never stop. During meal times and on half-holidays children were often kept at work cleaning the machinery. If they got any education it was after eight o'clock at night, when they were too exhausted to think.

Here is an account of the conditions in and round Manchester, written by Dr. Aikin in 1795 :

'Children of very tender age are employed. Many of them collected from the workhouses in London and Westminster, and transported in crowds as apprentices to masters resident many hundred miles distant, where they serve, unknown, unprotected and forgotten by those to whose care nature or the laws confined them. These children are usually too long confined to work, in close rooms, often during the whole night ; the air they breathe is injurious, little regard is paid to their cleanliness, and frequent changes from a warm and dense to a cold and thin atmosphere, are predisposing causes to sickness.'

Things were not much better in 1810 when Louis Simond, a French traveller, journeyed about Great Britain.

'Returning to Lanark,' he writes, 'we stopped for a moment

Why did you let go the Spindle you young villain
Sir R. Peel
London.
My fingers were so cold I could not hold it - O dear! pray do not kill me O! my back! O dear! pray forgive me!
Go to work you devils or I'll cut you in half -

English Factory Slaves. Pl.3 Their daily employment. —

Now then! it's ½ past 4, and Snows and blows hard!!
Poor Innocents! I must wake them or they will be cut to pieces - come my dear babes get up -
I am so tired mother is very ill
O! Mother these irons do pinch my raw leg so what shall I do o! dear!!!

English Factory Slaves. Pl 1 The Morning call

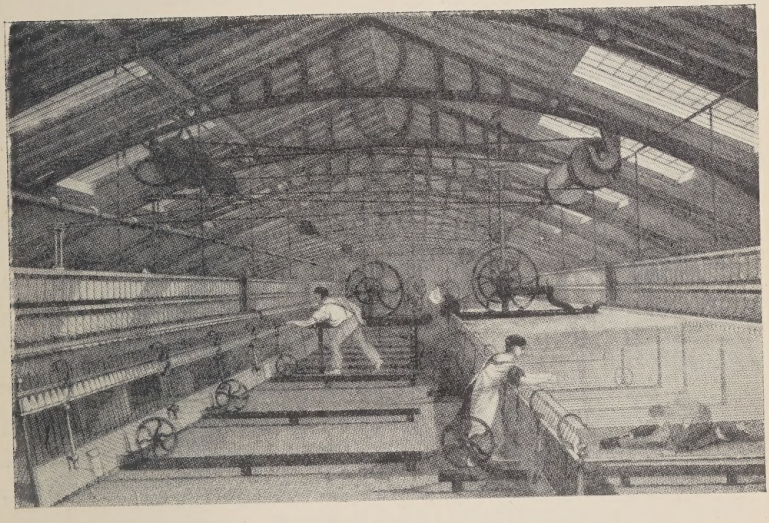
Cartoons by Robert Cruikshank

at a cotton-manufactory. It was the first established in Scotland, and the most considerable. It is certainly a prodigious establishment. We saw four stone buildings, 150 feet front each, four stories of twenty windows, and several other buildings, less considerable ; 2,500 workmen, mostly children, who work from six o'clock in the morning till seven o'clock in the evening, having in that interval an hour and a quarter allowed for their meals ; at night, from eight to ten for school. These children are taken into employment at eight years old, receiving five shillings a-week. Part of them inhabit houses close to the manufactory, others at Lanark, one mile distance ; and we were assured the latter are distinguished from the others by healthier looks, due to the exercise this distance obliges them to take,—four miles a-day. Eleven hours of confinement and labour, with the schooling, thirteen hours, is undoubtedly too much for children.'

'I think (adds the good Frenchman) the laws should interfere between the encroachments of avarice and the claims of nature' ; an opinion which has come to be generally accepted.

At first the child workers were nearly all, as we have said, pauper children. But after 1800, as distress in country districts grew still worse, many families emigrated to the new towns to find work. If the fathers could not work, at least the children could. Further, since the children's wages were miserably low—scarcely three or four shillings a week and less than that in the case of pauper apprentices, the machine-made goods could of course be sold for less than hand-made goods, and spinners and weavers in the old centres, thrown out of employment, were themselves forced into the factories. These changes did not come about without misgivings and unavailing protests on the part of poor folk ; and for long 'factory-girl' was a term of reproach among honest people.

Between 1800 and 1830 industrial conditions in England were completely transformed. If we compare



The Revolution in Spinning

The upper picture from a drawing by George Walker, the lower from 'Economic Botany: The Cotton Manufacture', Plate IV

William Cobbett's account in his *Rural Rides* of the counties and towns he visited with that written by Defoe a century earlier, we see that great changes had taken place.

The old home industries had almost disappeared. They lingered in one or two centres such as Worcestershire. Speaking of its glove-making, Cobbett says :

'I have observed in this country, and especially near Worcester, that the working people seem to be better off than in many other parts ; one cause of which is, I dare say, that glove manufacturing, which cannot be carried on by fire or by wind or by water, and which is, therefore, carried on by the hands of human beings. It gives work to women and children as well as to men ; and that work is, by a great part of the women and children, done in their cottages and amid the fields and gardens where the husbands and sons must live, in order to raise the food, and the drink, and the wool. This is a great thing for the land where manufacturing is mixed with agriculture, where the wife and daughters are at the needle or the wheel, while the men and the boys are at the plough, and where the manufacturing is spread over the whole country round about, and particularly where it is in very great part performed by females at their own homes and where the earnings come in aid of the man's wages—in such cases misery cannot be so great.

'Then this glove manufacturing is not, like that of cottons, a mere gambling concern, making baronets to-day and bankrupts to-morrow, and making those who do the work slaves. Here are no masses of people called together by a bell and kept to it by a driver, big fines and almost by the scourge, in a heat of 84 degrees.'

But Worcestershire was exceptional. When Cobbett arrived in the West of England—the old cloth-weaving district—he found unemployment and misery universal. Here is his account of conditions at Bradford-on-Avon, written when he is staying at Warminster :

'Last night, before I went to bed, I found that there were

some men and boys in the house who had come all the way from Bradford, about 12 miles, in order to get nuts. These people were men and boys that had been employed in the cloth factories at Bradford and about Bradford. I had some talk with some of these nutters, and I am quite convinced, not that the cloth making is at an end, but that it will never again be what it has been. Before last Xmas these manufacturers had full work at 1*s.* 3*d.* per yd. at broadcloth weaving. They have now a quarter work at 1*s.* per yd. There was a turn out last winter, when the price was reduced to 1*s.* per yard, but it was put an end to in the usual way—the constable's staff, the bayonet, and the gaol.'

And of the Avon valley generally he says :

'The villages down this valley of Avon used to have great employment for the women and children in the carding and spinning of wool for the making of broadcloth. This was a very general employment for the women and girls but it is now wholly gone, and this has made a vast change in the condition of the people, and in the state of property and of manners and of morals. . . .

'This valley raises food and clothing ; but in order to raise them it must have labourers. The labourers are men and boys. Women and girls occasionally ; but the men and the boys are as necessary as the light of day, or as the air and the water. Now if anyone can discover a mode of having men and boys without having women and girls, then, certainly, the machine must be a good thing ; but if this valley must absolutely have the women and the girls, then the machine, by leaving them with nothing to do, is a mischievous thing, and a producer of most dreadful misery.'

Once again, however, Cobbett could not put back the clock. The factories had come to stop. If things were to be improved it had to be through reforming the factories, not through breaking machinery. And as a matter of fact attempts were being made, by certain individuals, right from the beginning of the nineteenth century, to call public attention to conditions in the factories, and to induce Parliament to insist on certain improvements—such as the shortening of the hours of labour, the pro-

vision of half-holidays, and of intervals for meals, the regulation of the heat inside the factories, the raising of the age at which children might be employed, the prevention of night work for children, the suitable feeding, clothing, and educating of apprentices, the cleaning and ventilating of factories, and the appointment of factory inspectors. The first Factory Act was passed in 1802 and a whole series of Acts followed, but up to the year 1832 no suitable ways had been discovered in which these regulations could be enforced.

In the year 1833 Parliament appointed a commission to inquire into the effects of factory work upon the workers, and especially upon women and girls. As a result of this inquiry two remarkable facts came to light. First was the serious effect of factory work upon health, second the unfitness of women factory workers for any other kind of life, and particularly for home life.

This second fact had been noticed as early as 1800. In that year a Manchester correspondent, writing to the Home Office on the subject, had said :

'The people employed in the different manufactures are early introduced into them, many at five and six years old, both girls and boys, so that when the former become women they have not had any opportunity of acquiring any habits of domestic economy or the management of a family. . . . The greater part of the working and lower class of people have not wives that can dress a joint of meat if they were to have it given them. The consequence is that such articles become their food that are the most easily acquired, consequently their general food now consists of bread and cheese.'

So that the ignorance of housework displayed by factory women when they married meant that their families would be unsuitably fed, and this fact again would have a bad effect on health. John Philip Kay, who in 1832 wrote a

pamphlet on the 'moral and physical condition of the working classes', shows how these two facts—domestic ignorance and ill-health—were connected. He writes :

'The population employed in the cotton factories rises at five o'clock in the morning, works in the mills from six to eight o'clock, and returns home for half an hour or forty minutes to breakfast. This meal generally consists of tea or coffee, with a little bread. Oatmeal porridge is sometimes, but of late, rarely used, and chiefly by the men. But the stimulus of tea is preferred, and especially by the women. The tea is almost always of a bad, and sometimes of a deleterious quality ; the infusion is weak and little milk is added. The operatives return to the mills and workshops until twelve o'clock, when an hour is allowed for dinner. Among those who obtain the lower rate of wages this meal generally consists of boiled potatoes. The mess of potatoes is put into one large dish, melted lard and butter are poured upon them and a few pieces of fried fat bacon are sometimes mingled with them, and but seldom a little meat. The family sits round the table and each rapidly appropriates his portion on a plate, or they all plunge their spoons into the dish, and with an animal eagerness satisfy the cravings of their appetite. At the expiration of the hour they are all again employed in the workshops or mills, where they continue until seven o'clock or a later hour, when they generally again indulge in the use of tea, often mingled with spirits accompanied by a little bread. Oatmeal or potatoes are, however, taken by some a second time in the evening.

'The population nourished on this aliment is crowded into one dense mass, in cottages separated by narrow, unpaved and almost pestilential streets, in an atmosphere loaded with the smoke and exhalations of a large manufacturing city. The operatives are congregated in rooms and workshops during twelve hours in the day, in an enervating, heated atmosphere, which is frequently loaded with dust or filaments of cotton, or impure from constant respiration. The artisan's wife and children have little power to cheer his remaining moments of leisure. Domestic economy is neglected, domestic comforts are too frequently unknown. A meal of coarse food is hastily prepared, and devoured with precipitation. Home has little other relation to him than that of shelter. His

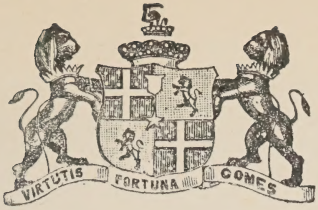
house is ill-furnished, uncleanly, often ill-ventilated—perhaps damp ; his food is meagre and innutritious.'

Many of the witnesses who gave evidence before the commission of 1833 were of the same opinion. Dr. Hawkins, speaking of the Lancashire factory woman, says :

'Even if she had acquired the knowledge (of domestic duties) she still has no time to practise them. In addition to the twelve hours' labour, is an additional absence from home in the going and the returning. Here is the young mother absent from her child above 12 hours daily. And who has the charge of the infant in her absence ? Usually some little girl or aged woman, who is hired for a trifle and whose services are equivalent to the reward. Too often the dwelling of the factory family is no home ; it sometimes is a cellar, which includes no cookery, no washing, no making, no mending, no decencies of life, no invitations to the fireside.'

The result of this inquiry was the passing of the Factory Act of 1834, but this was more concerned with improving conditions for the children and young persons (under eighteen years old) employed in the factory, than with making things more tolerable for married women. For these things remained much the same until 1843, when another inquiry was held. On this occasion Mr. Joseph Corbett, a typical weaver, gave his opinion as follows :

'Children during their childhood toil throughout the day acquiring not the least domestic instruction to fit them for wives and mothers. I will name one instance ; and this applies to the general condition of females doomed to, and brought up amongst, shop work. My mother worked in a manufactory from a very early age. She was clever and industrious, and moreover she had the reputation of being virtuous. She was regarded as an excellent match for a working man. She married early—she became the mother of eleven children ; I am the eldest. To the best of her



the

Collier Lass,

My name is Polly Parker, I'm come o'er from Worsley,
My father and mother work in the coal mine,
Our family's large we have got seven children,
So I am obliged to work in the same mine,
And as this is my fortune I know you feel sorry,
That in such employment my days I shall pass,
But I keep up my spirits I sing and look merry,
Although I am but a poor Collier Lass.

By the greatest of dangers each day I'm surrounded,
I hang in the bair by a rope or a chain,
The mine may fall in, I may be kill'd or wounded,
May perish by damp or the fire of a train,
And what would you do were it not for our labour,
In wretched starvation your days you would pass,
While we could provide you with life's greatest blessing,
Then do not despise the poor Collier Lass.

All the long day you may say we are buried
Depriv'd of the light and warmth of the sun,
And often at night from our beds we are hurried,
The water is in, and bare footed we run;
And though we go ragged and black are our faces,
As kind and as free as the best will be found,
And our hearts are as white as your lords in fine places,
Although we're poor colliers that work under ground.

I am now growing up fast some how or other,
There's a collier lad strangely runs into my mind,
And in spite of the talking of father or mother,
I think I should marry if he was inclin'd,
But should he prove surley and will not befriend me,
Another and better chancemay come to pass,
And my friends here I know, to him will reccommend me
And I'll be no longer a Collier Lass.

From a nineteenth-century broadside belonging to Sir Charles Firth

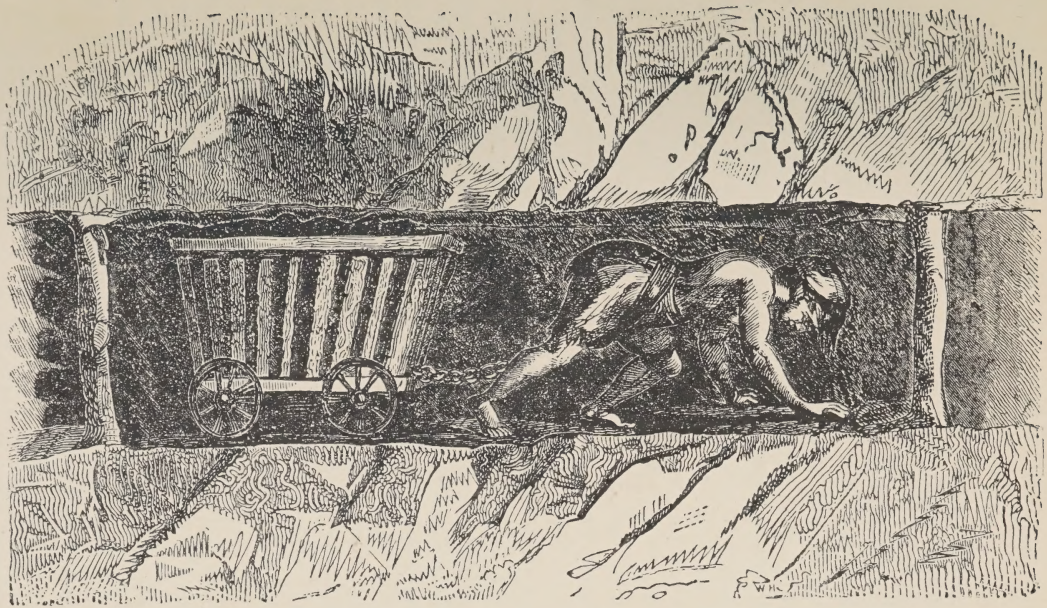
ability she performed the important duties of a wife and mother. She was lamentably deficient in domestic knowledge, in that most important of all human instruction, how to make the home and fireside possess a charm for her husband and children, she had never received one single lesson. As the family increased, so anything like comfort disappeared altogether. She made many efforts to abstain from shop work ; but her pecuniary necessities forced her back into the shop. The family was large, and every moment was required at home. I have known her, after the close of a hard day's work, sit up nearly all night for several nights together washing and mending of clothes. My father could have no comfort here, and he from an ignorant mistaken notion sought comfort in the alehouse.

'My mother's ignorance of household duties ; my father's consequent irritability and intemperance ; the frightful poverty ; the constant quarreling ; the pernicious example to my brothers and sisters ; the bad effect upon the future conduct of my brothers, one and all of us being forced out to work so young that our feeble earnings would only produce 1*s.* a week ; cold and hunger, and the innumerable sufferings of my childhood, crowd upon my mind and overpower me.'

And here is the conclusion to which the Committee of Inquiry came :

'The employment of females during childhood prevents them from forming the domestic habits usually acquired by women in their station. . . . The women are so far from being good household managers that very few can sew ; baking and cooking they can just do—A vast number of these females cannot make, mend or repair a single tear. . . . A girl who has been accustomed for years to a workshop or manufactory, or a pit bank, can scarcely ever make any of her own clothes, cook a dinner of the plainest description or reckon up a weekly bill. In consequence, the man who marries one of these girls has no home but the beer shop.'

Mrs. Gaskell, who in 1843 was living and working among the poor of Manchester as the wife of a Unitarian minister, describes in her novel *Mary Barton* very much the same state of affairs. Mrs. Wilson, Mary's future



The scandal of the coal-mines revealed by the Report of the Royal Commission, 1842. A half-naked girl drawing a loaded truck

mother-in-law, tells Mary her own story in the following words :

' " If you'll believe me, Mary, there never was such a born goose at housekeeping as I were, and yet he married me !

' " I had been in a factory sin five years old almost, and I knew naught about cleaning or cooking, let alone washing or such like work. The day after we were married he went to his work at after breakfast and says he, ' Jenny, we'll ha' th' cold beef and potatoes, and that 's a dinner for a prince.' I were anxious to make him comfortable, God knows how anxious. And yet I'd no notion how to cook a potato. I know'd they were boiled, and know'd their skins were taken off, and that were all. So I tidied my house in a rough kind o' way, then I looked at that very clock yonder ; and I seed it were nine o'clock, so, thinks I, the potatoes shall be well boiled at any rate, and I gets 'em on the fire in a jiffy (that 's to say as soon as I could peel 'em, which were a tough job at first), and then I fell to unpacking my boxes—and at twenty minutes past twelve he comes home, and I had the beef ready on the table, and I went to take the potatoes out o' th' pot, but oh ! Mary, th' water had boiled away, and they were all a nasty brown mess, as smelt all through the house. He said naught and were very gentle, but oh ! Mary, I cried so that afternoon. I shall ne'er forget it ; no never. I made many a blunder at after, but none that fretted me like that."

' " Father does not like girls to work in factories," said Mary.

' " No, I know he does not, and reason good. They oughtn't to go at all after they are married ; that I'm very clear about, I could reckon up nine men I know as has been driven to the public house by having wives as worked in factories ; good folk, too, as thought there was no harm in putting their little ones out to nurse, and letting their house go all dirty, and their fires all out ; and that was a place as was tempting for a husband to stay in, was it ? He soon finds out th' gin shops, where all is clean and bright, and gives a man a welcome as it were." '

If factory work did not help to make good housewives, neither did the kind of housing accommodation which the new towns provided. Where a town grew up round a factory or a group of factories, the houses were built

as quickly and cheaply as possible. Often they were owned by the owner of the factory and let to his workers. Sometimes each man when taken on at the works would be given the key of a cottage and would have the rent deducted from his weekly wages. Since the land near to a factory became very quickly valuable, and since workers were anxious, in the days before buses, trams, or railways, to live as near to their work as possible, these houses were crowded together, on either side of narrow streets, with no gardens or open spaces, and often with little light and air.

Mrs. Gaskell's novel, *Mary Barton*, contains accounts of both the best and the worst type of factory worker's house. Here is the best type—the cottage rented by the Bartons :

'Mrs. Barton produced the key of the door from her pocket, and on entering the house place it seemed as if they were in total darkness, except one bright spot, a red hot fire smouldering under a large piece of coal, which John Barton instantly applied himself to break up, and the effect was warm and glowing light in every corner. To add to this, Mrs. Barton lighted a dip by sticking it in the fire, and having placed it in a tin candlestick, began to look about her. The room was tolerably large and possessed many conveniences. On the right of the door as you entered was a longish window with a broad ledge. On each side of this hung blue and white check curtains. Two geraniums, unpruned and leafy, which stood on the sill, formed a further defence from out-door pryers. In the corner between the window and the fireside was a cupboard, apparently full of plates and dishes, cups and saucers, and some more nondescript articles. It was evident Mrs. Barton was proud of her crockery and glass, for she left her cupboard door open, with a glance round of satisfaction and pleasure.

'On the opposite side to the door and window was the staircase, and two doors ; one of which (the nearest to the fire) led into a sort of little back kitchen, where dirty work, such as washing up dishes, might be done, and whose shelves served as larder, and

pantry, and storeroom and all. The other door, which was considerably lower, opened into the coalhole—the slanting closet under the stairs ; from which, to the fireplace, there was a gay coloured piece of oilcloth laid. The place seemed almost crammed with furniture (sure sign of good times among the mills). Beneath the window was a dresser, with three deep drawers. Opposite the fireplace was a table. On it, resting against the wall was a bright green japanned tea tray. It was in some measure propped up by a crimson tea caddy, also of japan ware. A round table on one branching leg, ready for use, stood in the corresponding corner to the cupboard ; and if you can picture all this, with a washy but clean stencilled pattern on the walls, you can form some idea of John Barton's home.'

And here is an account of the worst type of cellar dwelling, which in 1848 was only too common in Manchester. John Barton and his friend Wilson are going to pay a visit to a fellow worker who is stricken with fever. Here is Mrs. Gaskell's description of the street in which he lived :

' It was unpaved, and down the middle a gutter forced its way, every now and then forming pools in the holes with which the street abounded. Women from their doors tossed household slops of every description into the gutter ; they ran into the next pool, which overflowed and stagnated. Heaps of ashes were the stepping stones. Our friends were not dainty, but even they picked their way till they got to some steps leading down to a small area, where a person standing would have his head about one foot below the level of the street, and might at the same time touch the window of the cellar and the damp muddy wall right opposite. You went down one step even from the foul area into the cellar in which a family of human beings lived. It was very dark inside. The window panes many of them were broken and stuffed with rags. The smell was so fetid as almost to knock the two men down. Quickly recovering themselves, they began to penetrate the thick darkness of the place, and to see three or four little children rolling on the damp, nay wet, brick floor, through which the stagnant, filthy moisture of the street oozed up ; the fireplace was empty

and black ; the wife sat on her husband's chair, and cried in the dark loneliness.'

Neither housing reform, nor further factory reform, come within our period. Big efforts to deal with both were made during the latter half of the nineteenth century, but there are many who think that conditions, both of life and work, for women in industrial towns, still leave much to be desired. From the North of England to Utopia is still a far cry.

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